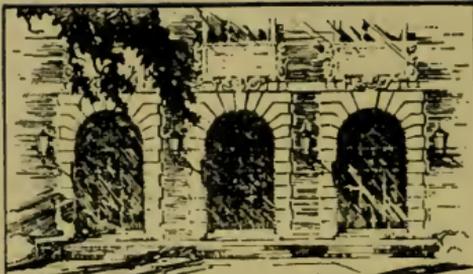


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EMILIA WYNDHAM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“TWO OLD MEN’S TALES,” “MOUNT SOREL,” ETC.

The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command,
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.

WORDSWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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EMILIA WYNDHAM.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

O, how much more doth beauty wondrous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!

SHAKSPEARE.

And what were, meanwhile, Emilia's feelings?

Refreshed and enlivened by her drive in the Park—her blood flowing through her veins with a freedom long unknown—her spirits cheered by the gay and beautiful scene of herbage, foliage, and gay company which she had quitted—she was set down at her dull, dark house in Chancery Lane.

Many would have entered this gloomy prison in melancholy and discontent—it would have been still further darkened by contrast with the sweet air, the bright sun, the re-

freshing green, the gaiety, the brightness they had left.

Not so Emilia. She had so schooled and disciplined her mind, that any little interruption of this sort in the course of her monotonous life was hailed as a refreshment, an assistance, and an encouragement to persevere in the course of duty on which she had resolved.

She had said little during her drive, but had listened amused, yet secretly alarmed, to the gay prattle which passed between her lovely companion and all the admiring cavaliers who surrounded the carriage. She had been cheered by the affection which Mrs. Lenox had lavished upon her, and her heart was deeply touched and interested by the sight of her children—for, if there was that thing in the world which Emilia doted on, it was upon little children.

All these pleasant, or at least, interesting thoughts had called her from herself, and done her infinite good; and she felt that the refreshment of Lisa's society—of a return with her, as it were, to the light of day, to

those pleasant habits of life to which her early years had been accustomed, would give a strength to her bodily and mental frame which she had long felt that she was beginning to want.

She was like a plant that had been buried in a cold, dark cellar, and to which the fresh air and warm sun restores its native strength and colour.

Nothing could be more affectionate than Mrs. Lenox—nor anything apparently more sincere than the pleasure she expressed in thus renewing the old intimate and affectionate intercourse between them—but there was one thought which already intruded to mar this happy prospect.

Sitting upon a fine horse at some distance from the ring—under the trees in that part of the Park which is called the wood—she had seen a figure which, do what she would to maintain her outward composure, it was impossible to behold again with indifference.

He had turned his head, and given a glance at the carriage as it passed, but he did not, as her beating heart told her to expect, join

it. She could not, however, be mistaken in the face—it was changed, greatly changed, yet she could not but recognize it at once.

The gentleman turned his horse's head, and galloped across the Park; but as they came down again by the Serpentine, and there paused to inhale the fresh wind that blew from the water, she had seen him again at a little distance, and again he was watching the carriage.

As soon as Mrs. Danby entered her own house, avoiding interruption, she passed rapidly up stairs into her own little bed-room, and, bolting the door, sat down to collect her thoughts.

He was there then.

He, from whom she had thought herself irrevocably and for ever separated had entered into her circle of existence once more. She had seen him, but he had not appeared to recognize her; and his countenance—at least so far as her hasty glances could assure her of it, showed that he was greatly changed.

There was the air of a man of high fashion—a force of expression in his countenance and carriage which differed a good deal from the elegant, handsome, but most natural and somewhat romantic Colonel Lenox of the Oaks. There was something high and military in his air—an aspect of command, not to say of imperious command, which, though it might have added to his attractions in many eyes, disappointed her.

He was no longer the Lenox she had loved so truly.

Still, her treacherous heart beat wildly when she saw him, and her good and delicate conscience began to ask questions.

What ought she to do? Might she, without danger to her own honour and that of Mr. Danby, indulge an intimacy with the wife, which must inevitably lead to further intercourse with the husband? Her heart answered boldly to the appeal—her pure, honest, innocent heart answered it with fearless courage.—She felt, it was true, that infirmity of feeling had for the moment betrayed her into an emotion neither loyal,

perhaps, to Mr. Danby nor to her friend, but it was but the emotion of a moment. She felt the assurance that her faith to both was firmly planted on a rock; she had the gratification of feeling that she might rely upon herself—not as the rash boast of ignorant security, but as the reward of long-tried effort and habitual self-control.

Colonel Lenox henceforward would be nothing to her.

One indulgence she thought might be yet allowed her—his happiness was still dear—his and Lisa's....She thought she already saw that the welfare of both was in peril, and that her influence might assist in saving the sweet and volatile creature from the many snares with which she saw her to be surrounded. The idea was more delightful to that poor, desolated heart than any of you, surrounded by the influences of kind domestic affections, will find it easy to believe.

The next subject for consideration was—ought she not, now, to make Mr. Danby aware of the true state of her feelings? Out of regard for his happiness she had long con-

cealed them—ought she not, now, to make him acquainted with everything, and leave to him the decision of her future conduct?

This was the course prescribed by sincerity, candour, truth, and principle—and such a course was sure to approve itself to Emilia. He had treated her on his part with little confidence, and his habitual reserve had infected even her frank and open-hearted temper with something of its own constraint. She was also become rather afraid of him, and had not been able to acquire the habit of speaking to him very openly. . . . but upon this occasion she resolved to do it—and with an eye bright with conscious integrity, a brow unclouded, and a heart relieved, went down to meet her husband and father at dinner; for, after all, Mr. Danby did not dine in the city; but had ordered dinner somewhat later than ordinary at home.

The poor father was, as usual, the object of her unremitting attention during the meal. Her husband sat, as was his wont, with papers by his side, at which he from time to time looked while he ate. There were times when

he never once spoke to either of them during the whole dinner; and he was so absent to-day that he seemed quite to have forgotten the event so intensely interesting to Emilia; but she never took little things ill; she looked at him, and smiled to herself at his forgetfulness, and busied herself in preparing for her father his treat of fish; for he required as much attention as a little child.

The poor man was in high glee over his indulgence, and said so many happy and affectionate things, that, foolish as they were, they gave her much pleasure; and her spirits kept rising more and more, till at length she felt quite equal to the task she had proposed to herself. However, upon Mr. Danby thrusting back his chair, and leaving the room abruptly before the cloth was removed, she found she must postpone it till the evening.

It was then after tea, and when her father had gone to bed, that, seeing him at last lay down those never-ending papers, she summoned up her courage, and began with--

“ You do not ask me what I did with myself this morning ?”

“ Why should I?—You spent your time much as usual, I suppose.”

“ No—that, indeed, I did not. I went to see the blooming and beautiful young lady you told me of—Mrs. Glenlyon—”

“ Oh, ay! I remember—a former friend of yours, if I recollect right?”

“ Yes—but her name was not then Glenlyon.”

“ Of course not. She was not married, I think, in those days.”

“ Are you acquainted with the gentleman she married?”—her colour, in spite of all her determination, rising to her cheek—“ he, too, has changed his name since those days.”

“ Yes—his name was once Lenox,” he said; but his attention now aroused and fixing one of his keen and penetrating glances upon her — “ of course you know nothing of *him*.”

“ There was a gentleman, Mr. Danby, whom perhaps you may recollect, staying at the Oaks the first time you ever were there....But very possibly you may have altogether forgotten him.”

“ No, I have *not*,” said Mr. Danby, with a

countenance of grave attention, as if he was prepared to hear more, and his severe and penetrating eye fixing her like that of the basilisk—"but I understood that young man perished in the battle of Albuera."

"He did *not*," said she, in a low voice, and endeavouring to raise her eye to his; but the eye she met was so steady, so piercing, so grave, that hers sunk before it.

Honest as was her heart, her eye played her false in the encounter. She went on in a low voice which she vainly endeavoured to make steady, "There was a mistake in the returns—did you not see it corrected in the newspapers?"

"And you never told me!" cried he, in a loud voice of anger and emotion.

"Why should I tell you?" said she, in a tone of gentle remonstrance. "Why should I suppose it could interest you? How should I know you had ever even read the return? What was Colonel Lenox, *then*, to either of us?"

A sarcastic, suspicious smile—that smile which she equally disliked and dreaded—curled

his lip. She knew when he smiled so that he never believed any person.

Still it was her duty, and she always did her duty, to proceed; so she went on—a little hurriedly though—

“That Colonel Lenox it is for whom you are now concerned.—That Colonel Lenox it is who has married Miss Hesketh.”

He started.

“Mr. Danby,” she said, with a dignity and composure, the result of her honest determination to do him right; “what my youthful feelings might have been before I ever became acquainted with you—you never inquired. The delicacy of your feelings—your confidence in me—were equally great. I thank you for both—as for the other innumerable proofs of your generous affection.”

There was now a deep attention; but no softening countenance.

“Separated, as I then believed I was for ever, from one with whom so many happy days had been spent—so many dear associations formed—I did not think it would be for your happiness to know, that there was one tie more

painful than the rest to break when I gave myself to you.—It *was* broken.”

Still doubt and suspicion clouded his countenance.

“ When I gave you my hand, Mr. Danby, I came to you with the resolution to give my humblest duty, and all I could of my heart.”

“ Ah !”

“ The rest, sir, lay in ashes....”

“ Go on,” he said.

“ I believed then, and I think still, that the true way never to rekindle those ashes was to keep my secret to myself—and dismiss it from my thoughts—with the things that *had* been.”

“ And you did! You dare to say that you did!” said he, almost fiercely. “ Nay, Emilia — no lie — a dissembler I may have thought you—a liar I never thought you.”

She was hurt—deeply hurt. She little guessed the cause of this distrust—those fatal papers. It had been his impression that they had been written *since* her marriage. It had never once suggested itself to his thoughts that they might have existed *before*.

“ I do not know,” said she with some spirit, “ why I should persevere in opening my heart to you, since I see that you do not believe me.”

He shook his head; but said—

“ I believe much of what you say, Emilia. I have very seldom met with any person, man or woman....and could believe *all* that they might say—but go on.”

“ I think I have said all that I had to say—perhaps you will not believe me when I add, that if I wish—as I do most earnestly wish—to renew my intimacy with Lisa, no thought that you could by possibility disapprove mingles with this....Still I did not think myself, as was once the case, justified in electing myself into a judge in this matter. I have laid my heart open to you—and it is for you to decide what I am to do.”

He looked steadily, and almost sternly, at her, as he said—

“ And you are prepared to assure me—that you never, in word, thought, or deed, *indulged* the feelings, which you tell me you had resolved to conquer.”

“ Never !”

“ Could you swear this ?”

“ No,” said she, shrinking ; “ our thoughts are questionable things—we are not always masters of them ; but never, if I can trust my own heart, have I broken my loyalty and faith to you—by *indulging* the thoughts which might arise.”

“ I do not know what you call *indulging*,” said he, turning away from her coldly.

“ On that one fatal evening, when I thought that he I had perhaps wronged was dead,” said she with much emotion, “ I was surprised into an expression of feeling, which now I perceive you were aware of its cause, I own might displease you....I thought him gone for ever—and that it was useless to trouble you, or disturb your peace by my vain sorrow—but, believe me, I did not indulge it—when I was come to myself I almost rejoiced in it—I did indeed....Alas, alas ! what has poisoned your heart against me, Mr. Danby ?—I came to be candid and sincere.—Why will you look upon me in that terribly suspicious manner ?

Do you think I deserve it?—You *know* I do not.”

“ Ah, Emilia !” said he, with a heavy sigh; “ forgive me—I thought you more than woman !”

“ Alas ! what can you mean?—How have I forfeited your esteem ? I thought the course I pursued was right.—Indeed, I think so still. What do the hidden secrets of the heart avail !But now it is different—I must meet him now, in the intercourse of intimate domestic life, once more.—I *know*,” said she, her clear eye now beaming bright with truth and honour, meeting his, “ that I *can* meet him without impeachment of my loyalty to you. But I have no right to erect my conscience to be a judge in this matter.—You know all, Mr. Danby—decide for me. What you determine, I shall most implicitly and honourably obey.”

In spite of all his hidden reasons, as he thought, he felt ashamed of his suspicions.

Her brow was so open—her whole countenance so instinct with honest sincerity.

“ Emilia,” he said, “ I shall trust you—I

do not wish, or choose, after having played the contemptible part of a man who too fondly loved—to complete the character by terminating with that of the jealous pantaloon. I confide in you, Emilia. It is my wish—my injunction—that this intimacy should proceed as if nothing of all this had ever existed—and if you deceive me *again!*—why you will only have completed the miserable history of the man who would have died to make you happy.”

He rose in some emotion from his chair, and abruptly left the room.

“ Mr. Danby!....”

She longed to call him back—touched, melted, yet wondering and perplexed — she longed to throw herself at his feet, and beseech him to explain what he meant.

But, stung to the quick by what he believed her duplicity, to be at the very moment even when she was professing the most undisguised avowal of her feelings, he hastily left his house, and retired, as he had so often before done, to assuage the wounds of his heart amid the business of his chambers.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

There never was any heart truly great and generous, that was not also tender and compassionate.

SOUTH.

Mrs. Lenox came home that night from the opera considerably less *ennuyée*, and considerably more excited than she had perhaps done, since the ever-to-be-regretted days of her passion for Colonel Lenox.

The unfortunate conversation about jealousy had raised feelings—had summoned up a spirit in the bosom of the faulty, volatile, but affectionate young wife, which, had her husband only used the knowledge he possessed of the sex to understand, he would have been rather less careless in exciting.

The object of a brief and sudden passion, which was the result of his own deeply resented disappointment—her great beauty—and the attach-

ment too little controlled and too little concealed which he had excited — he had loved with vehemence for a few brief hours — to awaken, as from a dream, when the realities of every-day life had destroyed those delusions of the imagination, amid which alone such a passion as his can dwell. He had been more than lover as lover — he was less than husband as husband. He had been little accustomed of late to the enjoyment of domestic tenderness, and he was naturally of a temper little indulgent; for he was penetrating rather than just, in his way of thinking—he was little accustomed to balance the faults against the good qualities of those around him, and strike a righteous account, for he was fastidious rather than sound, in his ideas.

His model of woman had been formed, as I believe that of most men is formed, upon the ideal of his first love. He had respected, and esteemed, and admired Emilia, for qualities, the very contemplation and association with which rendered him a better man. He felt this, and he had the sense to value her

still more for the effect she produced upon his character. While under her influence, he felt that moral progression, so to speak, the sense of which is the most exquisite and delicate of human enjoyments. And he had accustomed himself to regard her as a sort of tutelary angel, attached to his life, under whose divine influence he was to become all that it is best for man to be.

Everything that belonged to the higher qualities of his nature—the finer moralities—the more deep and real experiences of religious power—all that which was to elevate him above the herd of gallant, gay, but unthinking and erring young men with whom he was surrounded, was to be derived from her. It was thus that he had loved her; it was thus that he had regarded her; and though, as I have said, his pecuniary circumstances and a sort of weak fear of hampering himself with an engagement had prevented him from speaking those irrevocable words which would have secured her for his own, he looked upon her as so unquestionably to be his some time or other, that I believe the

most unexpected revolution in the laws of nature could hardly have astounded him more, than did the sight of her name coupled with that of Mr. Danby, in the newspapers.

Of the circumstances of the marriage, he only learned as a piece of cursory intelligence from his father—that, by Sir Herbert Montague's account, Miss Wyndham had done a good thing for herself in marrying a very rich lawyer. The sale of the Oaks and the state of Mr. Wyndham's affairs were related in the like brief manner. Little did Colonel Lenox comprehend by it the real state of the case. He hastily concluded that Emilia had been tempted, by the prospect of great wealth, to form a new connection, and forget all that had passed between them. He had seen many girls do so before her; and while he bitterly resented her inconstancy, he quite forgot to ask himself how far his own uncertain conduct might be to blame.

Indeed, if he had reflected much upon it, he might perhaps have endeavoured to rejoice, that he had failed to secure a heart so easily diverted from him.

Still, Emilia had left too deep an impression to be easily effaced; he could form no plan of happiness in which she did not make a part; and every idea of domestic life was flat and insipid, in which she did not share. The first effect of his disappointment was a sort of reckless defiance, leading to an irregularity of conduct, which his love for her had rendered till then impossible: its second, a certain hardening and lowering of the tone of character, which such a course is certain, sooner or later, to produce: the last, his falling headlong into the short and delirious passion which Lisa had inspired—soon to awaken, as from a dream—and return to those old feelings which had become to him as a second nature. But what was worst, he committed the great injustice of perpetually comparing in thought this too trifling and volatile creature, with the sacred idol he worshipped in his heart; and visiting her shortcomings, her caprices, her exactions, and her whims, not with affectionate correction or merciful indulgence, but with such contempt and indifference as these secret comparisons

of the real with the ideal are certain to engender.

“How to make the best of it.”—

Alas! that homely duty escapes too often the more susceptible and refined, while it blesses the humble and the good. He could not, and he would not condescend to make this sort of righteous compromise between his imagination and his affections. He would not endeavour to discern what was really excellent, under all this waywardness and whim of his companion; far less would he condescend to the task of endeavouring to disentangle this labyrinth—correct what was evil—encourage what was good—and attempt to preserve her happiness and his own.

After a very few fruitless endeavours in this way, he gave up the whole thing as a lost hope; taught himself to consider his situation as no worse than that of numbers of men of his acquaintance, who had vain and silly wives; and sought refuge in the same compensations—his clubs, his race-horses, his men parties, and his being as little at home as possible.

Lisa, as we have seen, first grieved over this defection with impassioned tenderness, and then sought to escape from her own wounded feelings by a course of reckless dissipation, which only served to confirm her husband in his contemptuous opinion of her. She perceived this ; and in that sort of despairing defiance with which a heart so wounded and so ill-chastised as hers is prone to meet this species of injustice, she seemed to take a wild pleasure in justifying that opinion of her which in her secret soul she knew she did not deserve.

Till now, she had only sought to divert thought, and, if possible, provoke him into some kind of attention, by a round of the utmost dissipation and extravagance ; but this dangerous course could not be continued long, without leading her—young, imaginative, and heedless of consequences—still further than she had intended ; and the conversation in the box at the Opera upon jealousy had given a new and fatal impulse to her ideas. In spite of his disclaimer, she was penetrating enough to perceive that

he *might* be jealous ; and the triumph of wounding him to the quick, in spite of his pretended indifference, was too dear not to be attempted.

I left her sitting in front of her box at the Opera, intent, to all appearance, upon what was going on upon the stage, and displaying one of the most beautiful faces and forms you ever beheld, with an affectation of almost childish negligence which was excessively attractive ; and I left one man, reclining in his double box, with his lorgnettes almost constantly directed towards her.

It was the fashion in those days to go into the crush-room upon leaving the Opera, and Mrs. Lenox entered it, leaning upon the arm of one of those innumerable fetch and carry spaniels who seem to be necessary appendages to women of fashion, and appear quite content to receive, as the reward of their assiduities, that sort of reflected importance which in consequence falls upon them.

Her cavaliers were for the most part of this description, and she had the most hearty contempt for every one of them: manifested, however, with such playful impertinence, that scarcely any one was ever offended; and, most certainly, no one alienated. She moved, therefore, fancy free, amid this crowd of followers and admirers, till her most evil destiny threw her into communication with the Duke of C., that most unprincipled and successful of deceivers.

He was a young man; had just returned from the continent; and for two seasons had not been in London. It was therefore quite as a novelty that he had first seen her at a large London party; and he thought her the prettiest and most delightful little novelty that he had met with for a long time. To him, hackneyed as he was in the ways of both men and women, there was something new, *naïve*, whimsical, and impertinent, at once, in her tone and manner, that was infinitely exciting. He thought he was the most fortunate man in the world to find himself immediately provided, on his return,

with what would afford an interest that possibly might last out the whole season.

He had been introduced to her; and she who, alas! in her corrupt and evil education, had learned to reckon the pride and value of a conquest by the character for levity and inconstancy of the captive, thought nothing could possibly be so glorious as to bind this celebrated rover in her fetters. Secure in her own secret love for her husband, she fancied that nothing really evil could arise from such trifling, and was secretly proud to make him aware what others, quite as accomplished and far superior in consequence to himself, could think of her.

Let me pause for a moment. Let me beg of you to reflect a few seconds upon the dreadful accumulation of evil habits, evil thoughts, evil passions, evil principles, described in this slight sketch of the situation of all parties; and yet, such are the principles, habits, and passions by which, at this very day, hundreds and thousands of fleeting beings are impelled.

It was the third time that they had met.

She had been quite aware, as she sat in careless negligence looking at the stage, whose eye had been fixed upon her; and she entered the crush-room leaning upon Mr. Wilmot's arm (a sort of led-cousin, the led-captain of old stories), and looking with the most coquettish unconsciousness that you ever beheld. Simplicity itself!—perfectly unaware of, and insensible to the kind of buzz of admiration that saluted her; and talking to Mr. Wilmot, and the many lady and gentlemen friends around her, with the most engaging indifference to the homage proffered on all sides. The Duke understood all this little manœuvre perfectly well, but he did not like her the less—rather the more for it. Moral approbation was the very last thing that ever entered into his thoughts, when he admired any one.

He was an adept in his fatal and wicked game—he looked just as unconcerned and negligent as herself, and stood leaning against a marble table in a most elegant attitude, displaying his remarkably fine figure, and talking to one of his friends.

Her carriage was called, and, mortified and

disappointed, she was passing him, to leave the room. Then, if you care for such an odious scene, you should have seen his look of electrified delight, as if this was the first moment he had been aware of her presence; and the expression of deep, almost reverential assiduity, with which he held out his arm, to assist her in making her way through the crowd.

Such a pleasant reverse of feeling, instead of the mortifying disappointment of the moment before!—a sort of suppressed emotion, a slight trembling as she laid her hand on his arm—a few low words of doubtful meaning!...

Oh, base and practised deceiver!

She was now, for the first time since her marriage, occupied at her solitary breakfast with one subject, to the exclusion of all others, and that subject neither her husband, her children, nor her friend. She was wondering what the Duke could mean by what he had said; he might mean much—he might mean nothing. Was she to resent as imper-

tenant? Was she to pity as unhappy? Was she to forget as of no real import? — Then the jealous looks of many of her female friends, all emulous to attract the attention of this celebrated *roué*, as she carried him away from among them all—evidently a most willing captive to her charms! The delightful reverse of feeling she had experienced, when he started, as it were, into life and observance, and for her alone!

So she sat, playing with her tea-spoon, in a pleasant reverie, till the clock struck four; and then she remembered that she had promised Mrs. Danby to be in Chancery Lane by that hour, and to take her to drive out before her husband's five o'clock dinner.

She rang the silver bell hastily, and inquired whether the carriage was in waiting; then sent for her maid, ordered her favourite bonnet and favourite cloak, and put both on with a care and attention most unusual; for she was generally as careless in her toilette as in other things. She did not even ask for her children, but got into her carriage and went

musing up the Strand, heedless of everything around her.

Had she not been so engaged, she might have seen her husband, followed by his servant, slowly riding down the street with the air of a man lost in profound melancholy. He, too, had been in Chancery Lane.

An invincible desire — a curiosity not to be resisted had led him to visit the place where she had chosen to take up her dwelling, in preference, as it would seem, to that which he might have had to offer. He had looked upon the small dingy-looking house, which he had ascertained to be that of Mr. Danby, and could only marvel at the inexplicable infatuation which had led that gay and blooming creature to accept so strange and unnatural a fate. He began to think that some mystery never yet comprehended must lie at the bottom of all this.

The proud, resentful resolution he had at first made never to speak to Emilia again began to yield to softer and kinder sentiments; he began to inquire whether she could

be happy in an existence so apparently foreign to all she had formerly loved and delighted in; to marvel what strange fascination had come over her. He wished to see her — to speak to her, and to satisfy his sore and wounded heart by at least endeavouring to comprehend the cause which had led to this desertion.—He resolved to be presented to Emilia by his wife.

He did not conscientiously ask his heart, as she had done, how far this would be prudent or would be right?—how far he was acting honourably by the partner to whom he had pledged his existence, in thus suffering so much thought, so much tender regret, still to linger around the image of another.

He never reflected how great was the injustice of such indulgence. But, alas! for the cause of all this evil—the cause which had blighted yet another existence! Alas! for the extent of the ruin occasioned by the faults and weaknesses of an individual so insignificant as Mr. Wyndham!

Seeing his wife's carriage going up the

Strand, Colonel Lenox conjectured at once her errand; and impatient to be introduced to Emilia—anxious to read some part at least of her history in a countenance and manner which he felt he never should misunderstand, he slowly took the way which led to the Park.

The two friends had met this morning with an air of almost equal gravity on both sides.

Lisa gave an affectionate rather than her usual animated greeting to her friend; while Emilia, absorbed by her own feelings, after the first few sentences had been exchanged, relapsed into silence; and thus they pursued their way, almost without uttering a syllable.

Emilia, pre-occupied, pale, and anxious, was dwelling upon her late conversation with her husband—filled with sympathy for his sufferings, and perplexity as to their cause—grieved at his suspicions, and filled with doubts and hesitation as to what was her best and wisest course under the circumstances.

To break off all intimacy with Mrs. Lenox, at this moment of their re-union, in spite of his permission, nay, injunction to the contrary,

seemed unnecessary, unwise—it would serve probably to justify in some degree his injurious suspicions, and might only keep alive in his mind this painful and torturing jealousy : added to all which, it must in truth be confessed that she felt as if the sacrifice, unless imposed by an imperative duty, would be one too great, even for her. She had tasted again of life—she had bathed in the daylight of happiness once more—her dulled and miserable being, fast sinking into that sort of apathy and cold indifference—that living death—which such an existence proves to a temperament like hers, had been called back, awakened, as it were, to brief but healthful enjoyment, by this meeting with her long lost Lisa. Could she—ought she—must she—extinguish that light, abandon the bright day-spring which rose once more upon her, and return to the darkness and gloom in which her thoughts and feelings had been so long immured ?

She could not do it—she felt that, after having once tasted again of happiness, however clouded, however imperfect, to have

such happiness again totally withdrawn, would be to die.

And yet, how ill, how miserable had Mr. Danby looked that night, when he returned from his chambers!—How ill, how worn, when he sat down to breakfast, with his papers, as usual before him!—She saw too well with what a painful and distracted attention the sheets were looked over, upon which, till then, his whole mind and thoughts had used to be absorbed.

Her heart bled for him. This love!—this hapless, unrequited, undying love!—She had at last begun to comprehend its force, and to understand what had been the true source of the coldness, harshness, injustice, and even positive ill-humour, from which she had suffered so much; and which had checked the natural growth of that affection which she was longing to offer.

“Thy word shall be a lantern to my feet.”

Her desire to do what was right had opened her eyes, and made her, at length, penetrate into the depths of a heart which had been till then such a discouraging enigma.

Far was she from the remotest idea of, even in thought, failing in her loyalty to such an affection; to have cherished any other than his mournful and devoted image would have outraged every feeling of her nature.

She began to appreciate the bitterness of that disappointed tenderness which had produced this long estrangement. And what heart of woman but at once forgives every unkindness flowing from such a source?

An interest altogether new began to arise within her as she reviewed their last conversation, and comprehended the excess of a love, which had obtained only such a return. She recalled the generosity of his conduct, and began to wonder at her long indifference. All those trifling defects in manner and appearance which had seemed so adverse to the growth of any tender passion had been long ago forgotten under the influence of the close and sacred tie which united them. It remained only to strengthen that tie, by an interest deeper and more genial than

cold esteem ; and this interest was beginning imperceptibly to dawn in her breast.

She was thinking of Mr. Danby, and scarcely, in the least, of Colonel Lenox, as she sat with her pale and meditative face by the side of her friend.

Alas ! Mr. Danby, why could you not be made aware of it ? What agonizing tortures might you not have been spared ! Yes, torture ! It is not too strong a word.

Say what you will, the vehemence of a love such as his survives the short-lived hour of passion. It had become to him a second nature. The only feeling that seemed to exist in his heart was his love and his esteem for his Emilia. His love had been cruelly outraged by the conviction that it never had nor could be returned ; and that it was not indifference alone, but another and invincible impression, with which he had to contend. Still, in spite of all, he had esteemed—he had even pitied her ; but the late unhappy misunderstanding had destroyed his last consolation. With his fatal aptitude to suspicion, he believed that she had

now intentionally deceived him, and for a purpose—the purpose of being suffered to renew her connexion with Colonel Lenox and his family. He forgot the frank and uncalled-for confession—he only dwelt upon that confidence which he believed had been withheld.

His pride—the pride of a deeply-wounded and devoted heart—forbade him to repose—nay, drove him into the injunction to continue the acquaintance; while his heart seemed actually rending in pieces with the racking pangs of that jealousy which he would have died rather than confess.

His imagination, once so little busy, was now all awake; and, like an unbound fury, seemed to be suddenly animated to distract him. He pictured to himself that young and handsome man as he had first seen him, now distinctly remembering the fond and devoted air with which he had walked by Emilia's side: her blooming happy countenance upturned to his, while she cheerfully prattled away. He contrasted himself with such a picture—he looked upon himself till he loathed himself.

And she was gone!—yes, she was gone! where she should meet him, and talk to him, and smile upon him—smile upon him, with those radiant, happy smiles he then adored, but never since had seen—and she should taste felicity in *his* presence, in exchange for the melancholy misery of his own.

Unhappy—unhappy man!

He feared not for her faith. Of her virtue, suspicious as he was, he felt so secure, that a thought so degrading never once sullied his mind. It was of her heart, of her happiness, he was jealous—that heart he would have died to win—that happiness he would have gladly endured torture himself to form—that happiness which, from the first day she had been his, he had felt the deep, invincible conviction, could never, never find its source in him.

That thought had been wretchedness at times almost too great to bear; but he had never anticipated the intolerable anguish of knowing that another was bestowing it.

Business became insupportable this morning: he left his chambers at an unaccustomed hour; he thought he would go home; he

should be less wretchedly nervous in her presence; something she would say, or look, in which he might find comfort.

He was walking slowly along, when, lifting up his eyes from the ground, he saw a gentleman, a remarkably handsome man on horseback, slowly riding up Chancery Lane.

The gentleman stopped, turned his horse a little, and, lifting up his head, fixed his eyes upon the house of Mr. Danby.

Mr. Danby knew him in a moment.

It was, to use the hackneyed expression.... but it was almost literally as a dagger in his heart.

That fine, handsome, military figure, upon his beautiful horse!—Mr. Danby glanced at himself.

He longed to raise his clinched fist to his head—he could have torn his hair off by handfuls, and dashed himself upon the ground—extravagant as the feeling may appear, that was his instinct at the moment, and what he would have done had he been alone.

As it was, he suddenly turned away; and, staggering as he went along, plunged into one

of the darkest lanes, and spent the day, wandering like a miserable ghost amid the most dismal alleys and closest streets of that close and dismal region.

Towards evening he returned to his own house, stupified, but not consoled.

In the mean time, the beautiful little phaeton had entered the Park, and came slowly and idly up the way leading by the Serpentine; the two young ladies sat reposing in it, side by side, apparently lost in thought. Emilia is ruminating upon her husband's feelings and her own position; Lisa far less innocently employed, I am afraid.

The carriage suddenly stopped, and a gentleman on horseback spoke.

Mrs. Lenox started—blushed crimson, and, with an affected laugh, cried out—

“La, Lenox!—how you startled me?”

“I should think so,” said he, “for you are of the colour ‘*d’une araignée meditant des crimes* ;’ but, seeing Mrs. Danby in the carriage with you, I stopped to ask to be re-introduced to her, for it is a long time since we have met ;

and she has, in all probability—*entirely forgotten me.*”

In spite of his affected indifference, there was much more feeling in his voice while he spoke the last words than he had intended—a tone of deep sorrow and deep resentment, that drove the blood vehemently through Emilia’s heart.

But she only raised her head, looked up at him, and answered his salute with a serious and melancholy bow.—He had allowed himself to hope for something else. He had allowed himself to hope that the history of the past—that history, inscribed in indelible characters on his own heart, would be read in the expression of her face; and that upon this, their first meeting after their long and dreary separation, something in her voice and eye would tell him that she was still his, in spite of all the barriers that separated them—that in heart and soul, at least, they yet were one.

His colour changed. Wounded to the quick, he turned hastily away, the tears of pride, resentment, and disappointed tender-

ness rising to his eyes. That look had told him, as it was intended to tell him, that all was over for ever between *them*.

Not for the universe would she have wronged Mr. Danby by the slightest expression of any other feeling.

Yet grief, when she saw his fallen and disappointed countenance, a compassion the most pure and divine, melted that kindest of human hearts; she sunk back in the carriage, and drew her veil over her face. Lisa, in the mean time, leaning back apparently passive, sat watching them both. The little scene had been perfectly understood by her; for she was as quick and penetrating, when she took the trouble to observe, as she was usually heedless of everything.

She saw with a feeling of bitter resentment the emotion betrayed by her husband's countenance, and with an admiration and esteem she would have found it almost impossible to express, the grave serenity preserved by Emilia. She knew how little in such a situation she should have been capable of exercising the same self-control; and

thus preserving, in all its bright and unblemished purity, her good faith to her husband and to her friend.

Alas! that one so formed to reverence, almost to worship virtue, had not been better schooled to the habitual practice of it!

She took up her friend's cold hand, pressed it, and kissed it!

Then, looking across the Park, over the green turf of which Colonel Lenox was slowly retiring, she sighed bitterly.

“If he had cared for my feelings in the least degree,” she could not but say within herself, “he never would have exposed me to a scene like this.”

She felt wounded, insulted, jealous, irritated; but it ought to be taken as a proof of the natural goodness and justice of her temper, that not the slightest feeling of ill-will was excited by the secretly-dreaded rival. She loved Emilia well, and she saw her honour might be trusted.

“Do you think him changed?” at last she said. “He told me last night, or pretended to tell me, that you were so much altered

he should not in the least have known you.—Indeed, he affected not to know you, but that is nothing.—He never cares how much he dupes me; but he had better have a care ...the duping may not always be on one side alone.”

“But I *am* greatly changed, my Lisa,” said Emilia, with a sigh. “Why should he attempt to deceive you in such a trifling matter, as whether this poor face was aged and withered or not?”

“Should you have known him?”

“Any where—every where; and yet he is changed.”

“Changed!” cried Mrs. Lenox; “I believe he *is* changed!—You think you are changed, and so you may be in—*looks*; but who but a *man* would care for that?....You are not changed in heart,” she added, raising her hand and kissing it twice. “In you I see again, in spite of this Chancery Lane cheek, all I loved, honoured, and revered in those happy, innocent days of the Oaks. But in him!—Oh! he has kept his beauty, that he is so proud of, and his fine gallant bearing,

and all that which charmed me so in days gone by!—but *nothing* else is the same.—He is not unlike *that* Colonel Lenox in one thing, but in everything.—I have passed through these horrible metamorphoses by slow degrees; and it is only when I look back that I am aware how little...how nothing is left of that former man! But you, who can see at once the two extremes, will never credit me that it *is* the man....and therefore,” said she, attempting to assume a tone of levity, though her cheek was crimson and her voice trembling, “and *therefore* I am not in the least jealous of you; for, to say nothing of virtue, your good faith to your friend, and to the delectable Mr. Danby, and all that sort of stuff...I count upon your partialities for *le feu* Colonel Lenox.—I am sure,” added she, with asperity, “I, who so wildly, foolishly, madly loved the one, am beginning quite to forget to care for the other.”

“Nay, my dearest Lisa....!” said Emilia, in her old remonstrating tone.

“Oh, nonsense!—don’t talk to me!” she cried, with increasing bitterness. “The man

you have married may be ugly, may be stupid, may be ill-tempered, may be odd; but he's neither a coxcomb nor a fool — and he loves you. Oh! Emilia, treasure a husband's love? What is the whole world to woman without it? Your husband is a plain piece of homespun enough; but he loves his wife, after all. ...Mine is much too fine a gentleman to do any such vulgar thing."

Emilia's heart responded in silence to this reflection. After a few moments, she said—

"What you say, my dearest Lisa, is quite true. A constant heart and an honest affection comprise indeed a priceless treasure! — and yet....."

"Treasure it! treasure it!" cried Lisa. "The time was when I thought little of such things. I thought myself so^l secure of the love of all the world, that I little heeded who did or who did not care for me. His indifference — his barbarous indifference, has taught me how to value the inestimable treasure."

Emilia pressed her hand with a sympathy she had not experienced before. She had not

imagined that Lisa possessed so much feeling! She at once grieved for her friend's anger, and was filled with compassion for Colonel Lenox. She could not help fearing that the volatile and impetuous Lisa had, by her own ill-judged violence and caprices, forfeited the treasure she now so dearly prized; and yet, she felt that his coldness and carelessness were unpardonable towards one by nature endowed with such good and generous feelings—such quick sensibilities and so affectionate a heart—she felt that indulgence, firmness, gentle remonstrance and careful guidance, might have made of this young and loving creature all that was charming and good.

She sighed, while she reflected upon her friend's fate and her own: the one repulsed in her endeavours to supply the want of a more passionate devotion by affectionate duty. The other deserted for that very passion's fault.

The carriage proceeded slowly by the water, and now entered the wood.

Emilia felt the little hand she held twitching and fluttering with a sort of nervous

impatience, as a very handsome and elegant man, lounging upon a most beautiful horse, suffered the carriage to overtake him, and bowed to Mrs. Lenox, with an air, as it were, of suppressed but deep and melancholy interest.

Emilia was struck with the astonishing beauty and sweetness of the countenance, and asked her companion who that was.

“Which!—who?” was Lisa’s answer.

“That gentleman we have just passed.”

“Oh!” she cried, colouring deeply, “I did not particularly observe him.”

Emilia, surprised, and at once shocked and sorry, shook her head.

“Oh, Lisa!”

“Good Heavens!” said she pettishly, “do you think I am going to observe the whole Park?”

The gentleman walking his horse now overtook them again.

“A lovely day!” he began. “The park was never to me so enchanting before.—I thought I had become wearied of everything upon earth!—I little expected to see so very

old a thing suddenly invested, as it were, with a new enchantment."

"Very fortunate," said Lisa, "particularly as such things as beautiful days are not so very rare, but that it is to be hoped the enchantment may often be repeated."

"I ask it only — I ask nothing else beneath this sun, to make life one wilderness of bliss to me. — But such days do *not* return."

And he sighed.

And she looked down and began to play with the lace of her cloak; while Emilia, displeased and surprised, but scarcely comprehending why these few sentences should produce such an effect, looked from one to the other.

The Duke — for of course it was he — returned the look, with one of those haughty and impertinent ways of regarding a person from head to foot which seems to say —

"And who on earth may you be that presume to question or interfere with me?"

"Mrs. Danby," said Lisa, introducing them, thinking only of herself, and neither

observing nor understanding the expression of his face—he made a haughty sort of half respectful, half ironical bow.—He did not want to be introduced to all Mrs. Lenox’s possible acquaintance, much as he admired Mrs. Lenox herself. He would stoop, like the falcon, from his high sphere to seize his prey, but with the intention of bearing it aloft in his talons; he had no idea of associating with the things below. He was, in fact, the proudest man in London; and would have regarded himself as at too great a distance from both to measure the interval which separated Mrs. Lenox and Mrs. Danby, had not his interest in the one elevated her, in his opinion, far above her ordinary sphere.

“Won’t you get out and walk?” said he to Mrs. Lenox; “it’s very pleasant and fine.”

Lisa made a gesture of consent.

“But you promised me five o’clock,” half whispered Emilia.

“It’s only half-past four now. I must have one turn.—Dear Emilia, we have neither of us set our foot upon the green turf for

ages. We shall be at home in a quarter of an hour, I'm sure."

"I should be very happy," said Emilia, hesitatingly; "but you know you were so good as to promise to return me....."

"Oh!" said the Duke, "if the lady's engagements are of so very urgent and pressing a nature, would it not be possible for your carriage to take her home, while you indulged your inclination for a little exercise in Kensington Gardens?—I assure you, they are divine."

Lisa hesitated.

The Duke was more pressing.

She turned to Emilia.

"You could go home by yourself, and the carriage might fetch me afterwards.—It really is so sweet!"

"Delicious!" said the Duke, dismounting, and giving his horse to his groom, and preparing to hand her from the carriage with alacrity.

There was something in all this that Emilia could not quite understand; but she

felt an increasing dislike to the idea of leaving Lisa alone, in company with this man.

“I will not give your horses and servants the trouble upon my account.....I will walk with you.”

“How kind of you!” said the heedless and good-natured Lisa. “I will only take one single turn, and then your dear old ancient shall have his antediluvian dinner.”

They walked once, they walked twice, they walked thrice.

“I am sorry, my dear Mrs. Lenox,” at last Emilia began: “but,” looking anxious, “it is nearly six o’clock.”

“Is it possible?” cried Lisa. “Oh! I really do beg yours and your old man’s pardon.—Do you know, Duke, this fair friend of mine has got a barbarian of a husband who dines at five o’clock, and will kill her, like Bluebeard, if she does not come home; so we must be gone directly.”

The young Duke, seldom accustomed to be treated in this easy manner, even by those whose chains he professed to wear, looked

half vexed, half amused, half charmed, as they returned to the little carriage, which stood waiting for them under the trees.

“To Chancery Lane,” said Lisa, as they seated themselves.

The Duke elevated his eyebrows with a wondering stare, gave an ironical kind of bow, and they were gone.

“*That* was the man,” said Emilia, “that I asked the name of.”

“Oh! was it? It’s the Duke of C. Is he not handsome?”

“I think he has a very disagreeable expression.”

“Oh! you really do! But, I can assure you, he is reckoned the very handsomest man in Europe.”

“I am sorry for Europe.”

“What do you mean? Why, you can’t but think him handsome, Emily?”

“As far as features go, perhaps,” said her friend.

“And such a love of a figure on horseback! Did you see how he sat his horse?”

“I did not much notice it.”

“ I dare say,” said Lisa, petulantly, “ that you noticed *another* man’s riding a great deal more.....”

“ Nay, Lisa, if I am to understand you right, that is not spoken like yourself,” said Emilia. “ You know how I disliked these sort of hints and allusions, when, at least, they were innocent. Do not, my dear Lisa, let me be grieved by them now they are no longer so.”

Lisa was silenced, but not corrected. She was vexed at herself, for her conscience was ill at ease, and vexed at Emilia for being better than she was. She said not one word more till they arrived before that dull, melancholy house in Chancery Lane ; then, as she saw the door of what appeared to her the most gloomy and sordid of prisons open, and beheld Emilia, with a troubled and anxious look, preparing to descend and enter, her good heart got the better of her ill-humour ; and, shaking her affectionately by the hand, she promised to come and fetch her again to-morrow.

“ Not to-morrow,” said Emilia.

“Well, but — now, do!—and, instead of going round the park, we will go and play with the children. You have scarcely looked at my children. Ah, Emilia!” for a difficulty was always sure to create an interest with Lisa, “if you will come, I will promise to spend the whole morning with you and the children. I will, Emilia, indeed—though I never spent such a morning in my life. . . I don’t know how it is : someway, one never sees one’s children; and mine, dear little fools! seem so glad when I can come to them !”

Emilia still hesitated. She felt that it was too soon to leave her father again so long alone.

“I have *my* child too at home,” she said, with a half-melancholy smile, “who is glad to have me also. It must not be to-morrow, dear Lisa—let it be the next day.”

“Oh!” said Lisa, throwing herself back in the carriage, “that is far too distant a period for me to calculate upon. I shall send the carriage for you to-morrow.”

And she drove on, leaving Mrs. Danby to enter her house. .

CHAPTER XL.

Nature did her so much right,
As she scorns the help of art.
In as many virtues dight,
As e'er yet embrac'd a heart.
So much good, so sorely tried,
Some for less were deified.

W. BROWNE.

The clocks were striking six as the door closed after her. She tried to hope it was five, but six it was.

She went hastily up to her little sitting-room; her father and Mr. Danby were both there.

Her father was rocking himself up and down in his chair, almost crying for his dinner.

Mr. Danby looked both hurt and offended.

“I am excessively sorry, Mr. Danby,” said she, going up to him. “Mrs. Lenox promised faithfully that she would bring me home by

five o'clock; but she met an acquaintance of hers, a gentleman—the Duke of C., I believe—and he tempted her to walk—and I...”

“Make no excuses,” said he, gloomily. “I cannot wonder that you are sorry to come home.”

“It’s too bad of you, Emilia! I must say that.—It’s very unkind and careless of you to us both.—But I see how it’s going to be. You are going to be out all day, and only come home when you can’t help it.”

“My dear father, pray don’t be displeased with me.—Indeed, I could not possibly help it. I am so sorry that you and Mr. Danby did not go to dinner.”

“It shall be so, in future,” said her husband, anticipating, in a sort of gloomy despair, the total destruction of all that had given so sweet a charm to the short intervals of home-life snatched from his chambers. “We will not wait, and then you need not come home for your father’s sake: you can do as you like, then.”

“Indeed, indeed, Mr. Danby, I like to come home, for the sake of others besides my

father.—I am very sorry,” she added, coming up to him with persevering sweetness, “extremely sorry.—It must be so annoying to you to have the regularity of your life disturbed. Will you not forgive me this once? I am sure you will.”

His heart ached as he looked at her—ached at this sweetness, which had in it something more affectionate and unrestrained than he had ever seen in her before.

Alas for his suspicious temper!—He attributed to a desire to flatter and to blind him what arose from the change which had taken place in her own feelings, and the cheerfulness of her revived spirits. A certain shyness, a certain sincerity of temper, which had restrained her expressions of regard while she had felt they might be false, was giving way before the new interest he was beginning to inspire.

He only shook his head, and turned away.

She saw that he did not believe her.

She was more hurt than she had ever been before: he was beginning to possess the power to hurt her. He saw this; but, quite

incapable of estimating the force of a cause so refined, attributed it to the power of those new influences with which she was surrounded, and which were only still further alienating her heart from him.

The figure, indeed, of that military and handsome man, sitting upon his horse at his door, was for ever before him. He felt that she must hate and despise him—he hated and despised himself.

Never had his discouragement and despondency been so complete. He was quite spirit-broken. He contemned his own weakness, but he had long ceased to struggle against it.

There she sat still, with that countenance of goodness, simplicity, and truth, for which he had adored her; and he was regarding it all the while as only a deceitful mask, that hid the treacherous attempt to blind—deceive him. Every gentle word, every kind look, was bitter as wormwood to his soul; he believed she was only smiling to betray.

It was impossible that it should be otherwise; he had ceased to hope it; he had

abandoned himself to his fate. She had loved that young and handsome soldier once—she loved him still. She could not but love him—could he, with all his disadvantages, bear a comparison such as this?

The plate with his untasted dinner, was pushed away; he drank a few glasses of water, but could not swallow a morsel. Again she looked upon him with concern—again she ventured to speak.

“Dear Mr. Danby, what is the matter? You are ill.”

“I have got a headache,” said he, shortly. “I would rather be let alone.”

She was again silenced, and turned and devoted herself to her father. It was not without difficulty that she restored good-humour there. She had so accustomed him to have every wish consulted, that he could not bear the slightest disappointment. Her persevering sweetness, her patience, her good temper, her gentle endeavours to overcome his perverse and tiresome humours, were not unnoticed by Mr. Danby.

His attention was riveted: he watched,

but it was only to turn his head again away with a heavy sigh.

He usually went to his chambers after dinner, often before the cloth was removed; but this day, for the first time, he seemed fastened to his chair. He wanted spirits even to move: he was perfectly subdued, and incapable of exertion.

She, as usual, attended her father into the drawing-room, and placed him in his arm-chair to take his accustomed nap; but, not hearing the house-door shut after Mr. Danby, she came down again, conquering the little irritation his manner and repulses had occasioned.

He was still sitting in his chair, absorbed in the most black and gloomy reverie; he just lifted up his head as she entered the room, and then resumed his attitude without seeming to notice her.

She came up so kindly—laid her hand upon his shoulder, and said—

“My dear Mr. Danby, you are ill. Tell me what is the matter.”

He gently moved his shoulder, so as to

throw her hand off—looked up in her face, but did not speak.

“ I am sure I have hurt and offended you. I am so extremely sorry.—I may have given you cause before...I fear I often have; but to-day, believe me, it was not my fault. I would not be so negligent, so disrespectful to you, for the world, as not to conform to your hours. Indeed, indeed,” she added—and the tears stood in her eyes—“ indeed I would not, Mr. Danby !”

He looked at her again.

“ You are very kind—but it is too late.”

“ Too late !—What is too late ?”

“ To impose upon me !” he cried, with a sudden burst of passion.

She started back, wounded at the injurious suspicion: then her candid and generous heart whispered that there had been a cause. Had not her previous involuntary indifference laid the sad foundation of all this bitter feeling?

She came forward, and said gently, but firmly—

“ I do not know what I have ever done,

Mr. Danby, to give you reason, with justice, to suspect me of any desire to impose upon you, or upon any one.—I have always endeavoured, whatever and many faults I have had, to be truthful and sincere. This is the first time I ever was accused of the attempt to deceive.—I do not deserve it now.—I see,” she said, with some emotion, “I see, by the expression of your face, that you do not yet believe me, therefore, it is useless to say more. Time, and time only, can undeceive you — time can and will prove the injustice of your present feelings.—To time, and your own righteous judgment, I appeal.”

And she turned to leave the room.

“Emilia,” said he.

“Did you speak?” said she, returning.

He took her hand — gazing wistfully in her face—then dropped it—turned away—covered his face with his hands — and the big, large tears rolled through his fingers.

Again she was deeply moved ; but she did not know what to say or to do. She stood silent, hesitating, and uncertain.

He soon recovered himself—seemed ashamed of the weakness he had betrayed—and, rising hastily, swallowed a glass of water, and saying, “It is late; I ought already to have been in my chambers,”—left the room.

Such scenes as these acted with a strange and new power upon Emilia’s heart.

The emotions betrayed by her husband—his doubts—his anguish—his struggles with himself—the deep and devoted affection that was betrayed, through all the harshness and uncertainties of his behaviour, fixed her attention and interest upon him at the dangerous moment of her former lover’s return.

The intensity and sincerity of Mr. Danby’s feelings—the strange contrast between the strength of his character, the coldness of his temper, and the weakness caused by his passion for herself—his sufferings—his broken voice—his faltering gestures—his failing health and appetite—all filled her with a deep and real concern, to which any sentiment that Colonel

Lenox might once have inspired seemed, in comparison, but as an illusion and a dream.

This was real life—the other, dear as it had been, but a romance, after all. She began to wonder at her long indifference to a heart so devoted—to a character so simple and so true. Now that she had seen Colonel Lenox again—now that his image had left that region of remembrance, in which all is softened to an enchantment the most dangerous now that the living, actual man had resumed his place among the real, actual things of every-day life—it might, perhaps, be almost difficult to make you believe how much the force of her long and fatal prepossession abated. His image, no longer enshrined in a secret chamber of her heart, into which, shuddering with apprehension at her own feelings, she had feared even to look—was now presented, as it were, in the broad light of the open day; and the magical influence he had so long exercised seemed at an end.

The cherished recollection had been as of something sacred, almost divine—perfect in

ideal and in moral beauty. They met — and she was disappointed in him.

Now musing, in the solitude of her small chamber, upon all the rapidly succeeding changes of this eventful day, she contrasted the high and fashionable bearing of Colonel Lenox, his fine face and beautiful though somewhat hard expression of countenance, his indifference and unkindness to Lisa, with Mr. Danby's simple and unpretending appearance — ungraceful and plain, it is true, but instinct with the character of the man — with his intense, though misguided sensibility, and his devoted and single passion: and there was something in the truth and simplicity of the one, with all its waywardness, contrasted with the polished but somewhat conventional elegance of the other, which struck her forcibly, and in a far different manner from that which the unhappy Mr. Danby imagined.

“Look upon this portrait and on that.”

She had done so; and, to her own astonishment, she found that her strongest interest

was with the pale, discoloured picture of her husband.

You have felt this, no doubt, in a gallery of art. The more florid portrait, drawn by some modern hand, with all its fresh and beautiful colouring, has been forsaken; and you have been led, as by an invincible attraction, to some plain, pale, faded head, full of the characters of truth and simplicity, painted by a Rembrandt, and hanging in a corner.

The first time Emilia felt this — the first time the truth broke upon that heart, so long distracted with the idea of the fatal, invincible, and almost guilty prepossession, which seemed to have acted like some dreadful magical power to chill and falsify every sentiment—she sank down upon her knees, and thanked God for her deliverance, with fervent tears.

The happiness of that moment repaid her for all her dutiful and virtuous efforts at emancipation. At length, and for the first time for these long, long, mournful years, she began to feel her duty and her inclination were leading one way — that the secret feel-

ings of her heart were such as she might dare to indulge—that the long, wearisome task of repression was at an end, and that her genuine, untaught sentiments were such at which she need not tremble.

I wish I could paint her to you, rising from her knees, released from the dreadful apprehension of hidden wrong; bright, radiant, and beautiful; her heart at liberty, her fancy free; the noble, ardent, energetic Emilia, restored to herself.

It was like the change from this weary life of clay to another and a better. She has fought the good fight, and she has vanquished—and it is given to her, the high reward is given, to *love*. Yes, she loves him; not with the tumultuous, vain passion of her youth, but with the deep, sincere, and heartfelt affection which moral worth inspires.

She loves Mr. Danby—she feels that she does.

She is invested with a panoply. All her difficulties—all her anxieties—all the weary desolations of her life have vanished. The sun has risen, the shadows of the night are

fleeing fast away—all is clear, bright, serene, within her soul. She feels an angel's love for them all.

For him! that strange and withered man, who has so long suffered, though successful—for him, the long beloved, embittered by his disappointment—for her, that mistaken and misguided creature, shipwrecked in her best hopes, for her sake. Her heart embraces them all! Her soul is large enough for all! She will—she can suffice, devoted as she is, to make them all happy.

It is true, everything is still in confusion—one entangled labyrinth of perplexed and wayward feeling; but so it shall not be for ever—time, healing, beneficent time, shall clear away her husband's suspicions; shall awaken a husband's tenderness in the chilled and resentful heart of Lenox; shall restore the lovely Lisa to her better self.

Strong in her own feelings, she looks forward cheerfully. All, all shall come right at last—even, in this world, the web under *His* blessing shall be disentangled.

She fell asleep in this paradise of excited

thought; and dreamed of her husband and her mother.

When he entered her room, and looked, as was his wont, upon her slumbering face before he extinguished his candle, he could not but be struck with the sort of rapturous joy — the flushing colour—the restored youth, that like a glory brightened what had been so long sunken, pale, and sad.

But alas! he little understood it. He—it was but natural that he should—mistook the cause:—he attributed it to that return, which had, indeed, effected the wondrous change;—but in a manner how different from that which the husband in his gloomy despair surmised! He stood some time gazing, in a sort of wondering admiration, but as upon something that was no longer his—some bright, inestimable treasure, lost to him for ever and then with a sigh, amounting to a groan—he turned away.

Ah, sweet Emilia! Is your bright hope and confidence well founded; or must you, like others, wait another and a better world, before repose shall bless your anxious pilgrimage?

CHAPTER XLI.

The stern

Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes discern ;
And when they love, your smilers guess not how
Beats the strong heart, though less the lips avow.

BYRON.

The breakfast the next morning was more silent and melancholy than ever—Mr. Danby, sunk back in his chair, seemed filled with gloomy thoughts ;—while Emilia, grieved and perplexed, endeavoured in vain, by every kind of affectionate attention, to divert his melancholy. It was evident he was ill,—indeed, so ill, that when he rose up as usual, to go to his chambers, he tottered as he walked across the room.

She again went up to him—again laid that repentant hand upon his arm.—

“ My dear Mr. Danby, do, for once, leave these tiresome chambers to take care of themselves—you are really ill—stay at home

for one single morning of your life with me. Indeed, you had better. I have never had an opportunity of exercising my skill upon you, but I am a very good leech, I assure you. Let me feel your pulse—let me get something for you. Indeed you are ill.”

“I am not very well,” said he sadly, passing his hand over his forehead, and suffering her to lead him back to his chair..... “but I shall be better in half an hour.”

He seemed pleased with her attentions;—the charm of her kind and sweet manner was to him irresistible;—but distrust and suspicion were gnawing at his heart;—every action taking a jaundiced hue. His exquisite sensibility to any proof of affection on her part only seemed to increase his distress.

For oh what damned minutes counts he o'er—
Who doubts, yet doats—distrusts, yet fondly loves!

There is a knock heard below.

The maid half opened the parlour-door.

“There’s a gentleman’s servant, ma’am, with a note for you.”

And a small delicate note is in the girl’s hand.

Of course Emilia knew who it was from ; and guessed what it contained. She went up to the girl, took the note from her, and instead of returning, went out of the room and up-stairs into the sitting-room, to read and answer it.

The note was in few words—

“ Now do come, Emilia, to-day—I want to be alone with you.....I want to have you..... I want to tell you.....there is something..... Oh Emilia !.....I don't think too, my baby is quite well: do come to me...I shall not go out at all; we will spend the morning with those little cubs, if you will come I want to get fond of home — I do indeed, Emilia.....I shall, if you will help me — do come.....I shall send the carriage for you at two—.”

“ Dearest Lisa,

“ I cannot come to-day. Mr. Danby is not well, and I do not like to leave him. —To tell you the truth — but I think, I will not tell it on paper, because you are wicked, and it might make you laugh ;—but

I think I ought to stay at home to-day—you know such dissipation as I have had, for the last two days, is a very rare thing in this quiet quarter; I shall quite forfeit my reputation for goodness if I am not more prudent.....but if you wish to see me, and can be constant till to-morrow, I will come to you.”

She returned to her husband's side, and said nothing of the contents of the note. She did not wish to seem to make a merit of her little sacrifice;—she brought her work in her hand, put out her little work-table, — opened her workbox, — and began to arrange what she had set her heart upon working—a cap for Lisa's baby.

Her heart had yearned to these little children as soon as she had seen them.—Such blessings had been denied to herself — blessings so supreme, which have consoled many a disappointed heart for the indifference and careless rudeness of its first beloved. The privation had terribly increased the loneliness and melancholy of her situation. A childless marriage, under the

best circumstances, is a melancholy thing,—in this it was desolation.

These children, so interesting and so lovely, occupied her thoughts much; she longed to see more of them; to caress and love these little beings;—and she had pleased herself with the idea of *doing* something for them; that first impulse of an active temper for those it loves.

Trifles are indeed to the jealous most weighty things.

When she brought her work and sat down by him, she was grieved at the increasing gloom of his countenance. She endeavoured to amuse him by cheerful talk. She did everything in her power to please him; but her voice, her looks—everything about her seemed only to increase his irritation. He was so weak as to be suspicious of the little note he had seen given; to be hurt that it had not been communicated to him; but he was too proud to confess the power of such a trifle over his temper; and still master enough of himself to conceal the cause of his additional ill humour.

At last he said—

“ I should be very sorry to keep you at home, Mrs. Danby.—Why do you not go out as usual to visit your friend? At least, let not me be any restraint upon your movements,—that is the last thing I would wish to be—”

“ I assure you, I had no intention of going out this morning; and even if I had intended it, I would not leave you to-day. The only day perhaps of my life that I might flatter myself that you wanted me—” said she, trying to smile.

He was still thinking of the note — he was hurt, he was suspicious — why could she not have mentioned its contents to him? But for the world he would not have asked a question upon the subject.

He wanted her to speak of it; — he fancied all the most irritating reasons for her silence; the cheerfulness of her manner only provoked him the more; he could not endure to see her look so happy — and another the cause. His temper got the better of him.

He rose hastily from his chair, and saying, "This room is insufferable to me," rose and went out of it.

And so she spent the day she had devoted to him in a sort of cheerless, discouraged mood; the bright hopes of the preceding evening yielding fast to this obstinate and unreasonable determination. She began to fear that a temper so irrecoverably suspicious could never be corrected; that the time was indeed past — and jealousy so irremediably established in her husband's heart, that nothing she could do would avail.

So passed away many days.

Emilia's time was divided between Lisa and her duties — such duties as she had to perform — which were soon performed. Her father required the attention of an hour or two, and that was sufficient; for he amused himself with some childish occupation or another; or, attended by his faithful servant, might have been seen slowly creeping along the streets and alleys of the great city, gazing

about him unmeaningly, yet seeming to derive gratification from mere change of object.

As for Mr. Danby, he was now less at home than ever;—he only appeared at meals, and these despatched, returned immediately to his chambers. He spoke very little to Emilia—never, indeed, addressed her but when something rendered it necessary, and seemed, in a sort of bitter desperation of feeling, almost to have given her up altogether.

And so he proposed, and so he thought he had. With his usual neglect of self-government, he had suffered himself to be again entirely the slave of his sensations. He was discouraged—he was wounded, jealous, and miserable; and he yielded passively to all these wretched feelings. He made no effort with himself; still less did he turn his attention upon her; still less did he endeavour to weigh the force of his suspicions against her words and actions—his distrust against her kind and gentle ways—his jealousy against her sincerity and truth. He was wretched—and he abandoned himself to his wretchedness without a struggle.

Look upon him in his chambers ; there he sits at his desk, his countenance clouded, his eye dim, — still poring, as usual, over his papers : but he does not seem to catch their meaning with his accustomed perspicuity ; his ideas are no longer lucid ; his views no longer penetrating ; he feels this—and his hand is passed over his aching brow—but in vain—the whole man is changed. Then he rises, and walks up and down his little darksome cell — then he resumes his seat ; takes up the paper ; endeavours to comprehend its intricacies as he was wont to do—and lays it down again with a heavy sigh.

Then he takes up that small discoloured folded sheet — holds it in his hand — gazes intently upon it — shakes his head—sighs,—lays it down again — and resumes the consideration of the case submitted.

The Iago of this second Othello was as different from the Ancient of the wondrous story, as poor Mr. Danby from the wild and romantic soldier whose hair-breadth scapes,

even at the cannon's mouth, had won the imaginative heart of the daughter of Venice.

Mrs. Danby, malicious, vindictive, jealous, and most ignorant both of human nature and of human life, was partly the dupe of her own suspicious temper—of her vile habit of thinking *all* evil, and partly the slave of her dislike to Emilia—a dislike that not one single action on the part of her daughter-in-law had ever justified, but which seemed to arise partly from that jealousy with which, as a selfish mother, she would have regarded any one who shared with her in the heart of her son, and partly from that strange species of enmity which characters so simple, free, and high-minded, seem instinctively to inspire in natures of this description. There is a power, a force, a genuine unbought superiority about them, which the pride and the bitterness of such tempers cannot endure. They are overborne, they know not how—troubled, they know not why—by the simple energy of these true and generous beings.

Certain it is, that Mrs. Danby cherished the most profound and unreasonable dislike

for Emilia; and her poisonous insinuations were gently but unremittingly distilled into the ear of her unhappy son, who had, as you too well know, inherited the suspicious bias of her natural temper.

I advise every one to beware of a leaning to the faults or vices of his family. The mysterious power of hereditary dispositions ought never to be forgotten by him who is employed in disciplining his own heart, or has to do with disciplining the hearts of other men.

There is little doubt but that Emilia would have triumphed at last — that the jealous irritation of her husband would soon have yielded to the invincible power of truth—and that the affectionate interest she had begun to feel, would soon have made its way to his perceptions, changing his despondency and his distrust into the purest satisfaction and the most rapturous happiness, had it not been for the fatal influence of a mother's faults reacting upon the answering faults of her own son.

But this is how it was.

Once more he is sitting in the old drawing-

room in Charlotte Street. There is no fire now, and the blinds are all down to prevent what little sun there is from shining upon the paper and carpet, and consequently cheering and enlivening the room.

He has walked up to see his mother, according to his practice on a Sunday morning, while Emilia and her father are at church. She is kneeling before her Creator, praying for him, her husband—for his welfare in this world and the next—for her father—for herself—for all the world—and lastly for her whom she cannot but feel is her enemy, that her heart may be softened, that her good qualities may not be forgotten, that she too may share, sooner or later, in the blessing of that peace which fadeth not away;—and while she is thus employed, her poor childish father kneels by her side, repeating his prayers and responses by rote. But they shall reach heaven, nevertheless. She feels this with a tender faith and joy.

While she is thus melting, and softening, and purifying her own spirit, how are the husband and mother employed?

He has come in with his usual—

“ Well, mother, how are you to-day?”
has taken off his hat, laid it upon the settee,
and placed himself in a chair by the side of
the table.

The answer is—

“ Well enough I am, but I am sure I may
ask you how you are to-day? Why, son, you
grow thinner and thinner, and look more and
more wretched, and older and older, every
day you come to see me.”

“ Do I?” said he. “ Yes, I believe I do.
I am growing old in years—but I am an old
man of my years.”

“ And you ought to take care of that, for
your wife, it seems, has taken quite a new
lease.—I never saw her look so young or so
well in my life.—*Now*, I suppose, I see her
as she looked when you so foolishly ran your
head into love of her. Well, it's a pity she
should have almost worn herself to death with
fretting; but now she's got among her grand
folk again, she'll be quite herself, I conclude.”

As usual, he made no reply to what he did
not like, and she went on.

“ Mrs. Lenox—and Colonel Lenox, forsooth! Now it strikes me, some of us have heard the name of Lenox before.”

“ Yes,” said he gloomily—“ *You* have.”

“ I thought so. Well, son, we have all our misfortunes, but this is the last misfortune I thought would ever have happened in our family.”

“ What?” said he.

“ To have a Danby pointed at by the folks as a dupe and a poor good-natured ninny,” said his mother. “ The Danbys have been a stiff race enough, I’m told, till now.”

She thought more of this than he did. His unhappiness had at least a more generous cause. His suspicions and feelings were of a more refined nature.

“ I know nothing of *the folks*, as you call them, mother. They may say what they will,” said he. “ I have never made her happy—I have not the power to make her happy. I was an idiot and a fool to suppose that I could. She’s happy now—that must be enough for me.”

Mrs. Danby took a pinch of snuff, with a most expressive and meaning air.

“ Well, son, you *are* a good husband.”

The door opened, and Susan appeared. She had a bandbox in her hand, and she said,

“ Missus, I’m going to church, and I shall go by Chancery Lane to leave this bandbox there.—Have you any commands, sir?”

“ Say, I shall not come home to-day for dinner. I shall dine with my mother.—Will you have me, ma’am?”

“ You know, son, how glad I am to have you, as you call it: it’s a rare enough favour, now-a-days, Matthew.—But what have you got in that bandbox, Susan, and what are you taking it to Chancery Lane for?”

“ Bless you, madam—what *does* it signify what I’ve got in the bandbox? No treason, I can tell you.”

“ But what can you be taking down to Chancery Lane—anything for my daughter-in-law? What do they send her things here for?”

“ Oh law, madam, don’t you mind that. It’s a mistake between the two Mrs. Danbys.”

“ Perhaps it’s no mistake, and the thing’s for me. What is in the bandbox, Susan?”

“ Why, if you must know,” said Susan, who was a very woman, and longing, after all, to tell what she knew she had better have kept to herself, “ it’s a new bonnet—and such a pretty bonnet!—my stars!—You—I should like to see you in such a gossamery thing.”

“ Let us see it, Susan,” said the old lady, “ at all events;” and Susan, opening the bandbox, displayed what was in truth a very elegant but very simple bonnet; but, simple as it was, certainly very unlike anything Emilia had been of late in the habit of wearing.

“ Humph!” said Mrs. Danby.

“ Humph!—Well!” replied Susan, “ and where’s the harm of her having a pretty bonnet, I trow? I’m sure she’s young and pretty enough to become the best bonnet in the land; and, for my part, I’ve often wished that she dressed and made more of herself; but she’s so simple like—she never seemed much to care what she put on.”

“ She begins to care *now*, however,” said Mrs. Danby, with emphasis. Her son, who had sat silently listening to this scene, started at the remark, and his eyes flashed.

“ And why should not she?” cried Susan. “ To be sure, now she gets sometimes out of that rusty-fusty Chancery Lane, in which she looked for all the world like a rose in a beer-cellar, she must have something decent to put on—you wouldn’t have her riding, day after day, with that beautiful fairy queen, who, every time I see her, has a new summut on her head, in the same old bonnet for ever—why it would be a shame and a disgrace to us all !”

“ I wish the shame and the disgrace may not lie in her old bonnet, Susan.”

“ I don’t know what you mean, ma’am ; and if my young master—sir, if you’re both of you thinking of the expense—why that’s the shame?—And I’ll pay for it myself rather than she shan’t have it—that I will,” said the indulged old servant, putting the bonnet into the box, covering it carefully up,

and preparing to walk away with her bargain.

“Ay! ay!” said Mrs. Danby, “you’re always so much in the right, to be sure—and I suppose the next thing will be, you’ll be going to defend all this gadding and running about all the morning long—a *quite* new thing in our family.”

“It’s not all morning long, nor any such thing—for, first and foremost, she puts her house in order; and next she looks after that poor ninny of a father of hers as if he was the first prince in the land, and hadn’t been the ruin of her like—and next and aftermost, she’s always at home to her husband’s dinner. And why—if you please—isn’t a young lady like her to go and have the air in them parks? as she’s been used to, as I have heard. I hope nobody’s going for to deny her that, poor thing—it’s little enough of pleasure that she’s had since she first darkened master’s door—and I hope he’s not going for to begrudge her this little outing, and which costs nothing like, ma’am.”

“ Well, as to the cost, Susan—that, perhaps, is not so easily settled ; but go away to church, and take the bonnet out of my sight—such things make me sick.”

And Susan turned away and departed, shutting the door after her.

To be so disturbed by a mere bonnet!—He was beginning to hate himself.

They both sat silent some minutes ; then that bad old woman began again with—

“ And I hope you like *that*, son ?”

“ What ?” said he, endeavouring to conquer these feelings, for the littleness of which he despised himself.

“ What!—Is that an answer ? Well, I’ve done.—In my day, women dressed to please their husbands ; it’s new to me when they go and take their husbands’ money to fig themselves out for other men.—Go, go, and read the chapter of Proverbs, son. Well, lack-a-day, lack-a-day !”

“ Mother,” at last he said, “ all these hints and innuendoes irritate me beyond measure.—Have you anything against my wife with which I am unacquainted ?—Is

there anything more than what I knew long ago?"

"You knew long ago that she didn't care a feather for you—*that's* long been plain. You saw plain enough that she was fretting and pining herself to death, and wouldn't be pleased, do what we all of us could. Well, all that's old news—but now she's happy and content enough, and she's blooming like a rose, and gay as Queen Dalilah herself....and though I didn't like her for her ill-conditioned pining and fretting, and so forth, I like her the less in her bloom and her glory. I *do*, son—but you may like her all the better, if you please."

But Susan's honest perception of the truth was never altogether without effect.

He was thinking, for the first time, whether all *had* been done to please her that could have been done—and whether it was not natural that a being so young and fair should love the sunshine and the Parks better than Chancery Lane? But the thought brought little comfort; it only added strength to that sort of distracting uncertainty, with which he suffered,

nay, insisted upon her going out almost every day—under the deep and settled conviction that he was permitting an indulgence which was ruinous to his peace.

He loved her so well that he could not bear to deny her a pleasure, however dangerous. His indifference and negligence in procuring these sort of enjoyments for her before had arisen from absolute want of thought.

His mother's reflections and the apparition of the elegant bonnet only seemed to bring in a more lively manner before his mind's eye that picture which ever haunted his imagination — Emilia happy, and not through him.

And yet he was radically and greatly generous—he could not bear to refuse her this happiness.

Crime!—he esteemed her far too much to fear that. The rest was only the immense, the incalculable, the last vast sacrifice to his heart's idol.

You, too, are beginning to love Mr. Danby.

CHAPTER XLII.

But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of Conscience.

WORDSWORTH.

Emilia meanwhile—her happy anticipations at an end, every day more and more discouraged by the increasing coldness of his manner, every day becoming more timid, more distrustful of herself, less confident of pleasing where she so sincerely wished to please—gave more and more of her time to her friend.

Mrs. Lenox came almost every day to Chancery Lane, now in one carriage, now in another, to carry Emilia abroad; partly from the genuine kindness and good nature of her disposition, partly from the absolute necessity she felt for her society. The idea of the

friend she loved so dearly immured in what appeared to her as the most intolerable of dungeons, and leading a life so insupportably dull and dreary, haunted her; and her greatest pleasure was to force her forth into the bright sun, the fresh air, the gay and glistening Park; obliging her to taste those pleasures which were become by long custom insipid to herself. The proposal to take her out in an evening, Emilia, however, steadily resisted. She had taken her resolution never to absent herself when Mr. Danby was at home; and though he seemed to take little pleasure in her society, and to receive these marks of consideration with anything but gratitude, still she persevered.

Her mornings, however, were chiefly given to her friend, who, restless and unhappy at heart, now sat in her boudoir confessing her follies, bewailing her faults, and listening to the representations and arguments of Emilia, and now abandoned herself to the wildest dissipation; filling the nights with an incessant repetition of parties, in which she found little pleasure, and the mornings in

every scheme she could invent to destroy thought and divert unhappiness.

Why she was so unhappy, perhaps she might have found it difficult to say. It was the restless craving for excitement—the fatal habit acquired so early of looking upon life merely as a round of pleasures—the fatal absence of serious views, of principles of action, and of the sense of responsibility and duty, which rendered existence so vapid and so wearisome.

I repeat it in my own words—“Duty is the salt of life.” The sense of duty is as necessary a stimulant to the health and enjoyment of our spiritual being, as salt is to give flavour to the daily food of man.

Without it the world soon becomes utterly uninteresting and utterly tasteless—objects there are none to arouse—purpose there is none to attain. The being deprived of the means of happiness, or condemned to the endurance of pain, suffers, and suffers much—but hope lingers at the bottom of the cup. Life retains its enchantments—the Hesperian gardens still glow in the west—could they

be attained, we might yet be happy. But woe to that wretched one who, like the gorgeous Eastern king, sated with wisdom, magnificence, and pleasure—has tasted of everything that the world can give, and arrived at the dire conclusion that *all* is vanity!

So it had been with Lisa, and so it would yet have been, but for an evil greater still. Gradually, and by slow degrees, she was allowing the insidious excitement of a guilty passion to obtain a place in her heart. Not that she loved—her affections were true to her careless and indifferent husband; but the pleasures of vanity, the gratification of enchaining as her captive that accomplished deceiver and inconstant rover, after whom the whole female world was *folle*, as the French say—and more than all, the interest of a sort of intrigue of this kind, as yet guiltless in all but thought—were temptations too strong for resistance with one never disciplined while young; and who had imbibed corruption, as it were, from the very mother that reared her.

Colonel Lenox was now less than ever at

home. During all her frequent visits to Brook Street, Emilia had never once seen him again. Her plans for every one's happiness seemed, indeed, in a fair way to be disappointed. Wounded and mortified at the manner in which she had met him, after the cruel injury which he considered himself as having received—his heart, so little disciplined or corrected, still absorbed by her image—he had made a determination never, if possible, to speak to her more.

The apprehension of meeting her kept him more than ever from his wife's apartments—they now scarcely met, except when they happened to be going out to dinner at the same place, and this was not often.

Lisa was deeply offended by this behaviour. She was, unhappily, experienced enough to divine the cause. It was the first time, in spite of all his negligence, that Colonel Lenox had ever given her occasion for serious jealousy, and her resentment knew no bounds. She was reasonable enough not to extend this feeling to Emilia, whose indifference surprised, but completely satisfied her—but all

her thoughts were bent upon revenge. To make her husband feel—to wring that heart with pain which had given to her so much cruel anguish—was the wild delight, the contemplation of every hour. She felt the time might come when he, too late, might regret the heart he had thrown away; and, in the pursuit of this most dangerous object, she forgot every other consideration, and suffered the practised man of the world to make himself a place in her favour, and begin to exercise an influence over her heart, of the full extent of which she was very little aware.

Little did the generous Emilia surmise the mischief she was so innocently doing.

Every day the cheek of Lisa grew paler, her eye more unsettled, her spirits more irritable and uncertain. Sometimes she would indulge in bursts of a gaiety as wild as that of her earliest days—at others, silent and melancholy, would pass whole hours without speaking. In general, she was affection itself to her friend, and filled with pity for what she considered her terrible lot—full of all sorts of generous plans for her happiness

and diversion ; at others, irritable, unreasonable, and unkind, it required all the sweetness of Emilia's temper, all her candour, and all her affection, even to bear with her.

The happiest time they spent was with the children, but even here the feelings of Lisa were as wayward and capricious as in other things. Sometimes she would seem to feel a passionate attachment to these little ones—at others, she would push them from her almost with aversion.—The tears would suddenly gush over her little boy as she pressed him in her arms—then she would remember whose child he was, and put him hastily away.

Emilia, meantime, grew excessively attached to these children—so little the objects of continued and serious attention from either of their parents. They were nearly altogether abandoned to the care of nurses, too little superintended to afford any security for their good management. She spent hours in their nurseries, caressing and playing with them, for, in truth, with them alone was there any comfort to be found. There was

nothing but perplexity and anxiety elsewhere—here, with these innocent and defenceless creatures, did she alone seem to find peace.

Nurse—who, after all, was one of those rare beings amid the race of servants who *do* what they ought without being obliged to do it—an instance so singular that I beg it may not serve as an encouragement for any one to neglect that first duty of every wife and mother, inspection—was not at all sorry to be relieved, at times, from her laborious cares by the presence of Mrs. Danby. She was not in the least jealous of one who never presumed to interfere, advise, far less dictate, and was well enough pleased to be able to run down stairs now and then and have a gossip below—while Emilia, the sleeping babe pressed to her bosom, the little boy holding her dress and tottering by her side, paced up and down those spacious nurseries, lost in anxious and painful thoughts.

What was to be done?

How was this false and painful position, in which they seemed all standing, to be set right?—this terrible cloud, in which, as

by enchantment, they seemed involved to be dispersed? She alone of the whole party seemed spared from the most distressing feelings. She alone, and why?

CHAPTER XLIII.

Be it not seen on either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.

DRAYTON.

She did not, perhaps, know why.

But I could have told her.

Because the rest were all absorbed by their own vexations and disappointments, and she alone was endeavouring to do her duty—she alone, forgiving the unkindness, was intent upon the happiness of the others. Accustomed to disappointment, inured to suffer, and released from the one great torture of her life, the weight of a concealed and dangerous attachment—she was happy. In spite of all—she was happy.

She was happy, in her close, and dark, and narrow home—between the childish impatiencies of her father, the invincible cold-

ness of her husband, and the slights and affronts of her mother-in-law. And Lisa, surrounded with luxury, and flattery, and pleasure, with lovely children to fill the void within her heart, was miserable.

It was a delicious afternoon. The sky was blue and bright over head; the small white clouds lazily sailing in the deep expanse; the sun shining in all his splendour, tinting the green trees of the park, and glittering upon the rapidly glancing carriages, as Emilia entered Grosvenor Street, and stopped at the accustomed door.

The servant opened it.

Mrs. Lenox had driven out for about half an hour, and begged Mrs. Danby to have the kindness to wait for her return. Emilia entered the house, and went up stairs to the boudoir; but hearing the voices of the children in the nursery, she ascended the second flight, and entered in her usual unceremonious manner.

The little boy started from his seat on the

floor, and ran with impatient pleasure to meet her, flinging his little arms affectionately round her knees; the baby stretched out its hands, and crowed and sprang in nurse's arms to get to her.

Her heart responded warmly to all this. She took up the little boy, kissed, and set him down again. She took the baby from nurse's arms, and pressed it to her bosom. She was soon seated in the rocking-chair with both children on her lap, kissing, and fondling, and playing with them.

Nurse happened to be quite alone in the nursery that day.

"I am so glad to see you, madam," said she, courtesying, "for Mary has been taken suddenly ill; and the girl has just had leave to go home to her mother for a half holiday; and Miss Baby ought to be put to sleep; and I have to go down to Mrs. Woodman for several things I must have got in—and altogether I am quite in a fuss."

There was no pleasure in the world for Emilia, equal to that of lulling Lisa's baby to sleep.

She loved to have these large apartments quietly to herself, and would pace up and down alone for hours, carrying the slumbering infant in her arms. The quiet of the scene — the soft breathing of the infant — the air, the light — the beautiful view of the tufted park, stretching before the windows — the wide expanse of sky, to her became an unaccustomed luxury; the well-ordered stillness of the apartment, the distant roar of the living world below, all soothed her spirits into a calm and delicious melancholy, which she could rarely or never taste in her small and darksome home.

She seemed to breathe more freely in these lofty apartments; her heart beat more calmly — she was refreshed and composed. All the perpetual irritations of her uncomfortable home were away, and that serenity to which she had been so long a stranger seemed restored.

She took the infant in her arms, and telling nurse to be under no uneasiness — that she would nurse it and get it to sleep, rose from her chair, and hushing the little one tenderly,

began her favourite walk up and down the nursery ; while nurse, having settled the little boy upon the floor, amid his playthings, went down stairs.

Leaving all so quiet—so still !

Long did she carry the slumbering infant, ruminating upon the present, upon the past. Her thoughts flew back to times so long gone by—to her mother—to the terrace at the Oaks—to those days of youthful happiness, her sense of which had been so exquisitely fine.

Gone!—for ever !

Then she thought of Colonel Lenox, of that Colonel Lenox, whom she had loved so truly ; of him, who had seemed to her so admirable and so excellent, and to merit far more than even her devoted love could give.

How was it with him, after all ?

Was he become, in truth, cold and heartless—a mere man of fashion ? Was his avoidance the effect of indifference ; or was he himself unhappy ?—And, if unhappy, could not he be restored, as she had been ? Could not he be taught to love the being to whom the laws of

society and duty bound him—the being, with all her faults, to him so deeply devoted?

So she mused, walking up and down the nursery, the healthful breathing of the slumbering infant seeming to keep measure with her quiet footsteps.

When suddenly she heard one ascending the stairs rapidly — his bounding step was heard sounding through the gallery—the nursery door stood open, for the heat of the day was great, and he entered at once—his hat upon his head, with—

“How are the children, nurse?—Well, my little rascals!”

But suddenly paused when he saw Emilia, changed colour, took off his hat, with—

“I beg your pardon—I interrupt you!” and was about to leave the room.

But his little boy, who had run forward, as usual, to meet him, and was clinging about his knees, seeing him about to go away without noticing him, burst into so loud a roar, that the father was obliged to stand still; while Emilia, colouring and embarrassed, was vainly endeavouring to pacify the infant,

which, awakened by the noise made by the other child, joined its loud wail to the general confusion.

To run away, and leave her thus, with his screaming children, seemed a thing impossible. He took up the little fellow in his arms, and, kissing and caressing him, soon brought the April sunshine into his rosy cheek again, wet as it still was with tears.

The child restored to his playthings, after stooping down and talking to him a little, he rose up, and turning round, perceived Emilia, who was laying the infant, now again soothed to sleep, in its little nest of white muslin and ribbons, intending to ring the bell, summon the nurses, and go herself down stairs.

He could not, he felt, leave the nursery as abruptly as he had entered it, without saying one single word to her. He came up, colouring and hesitating, and with a haughty coldness in his tone, muttered in a confused, inarticulate manner, something of "his being under infinite obligations to her for interesting herself in *his* children;" adding, with some irritation in his voice—"It is well some

one is good enough to visit them now and then, poor babes—God help them!”

To this a reply was necessary. Emilia looked up, and, in justification of her friend, said—

“Mrs. Lenox has but lately left the nursery. She has been gone only a quarter of an hour, I believe, to get a little fresh air in Kensington Gardens this beautiful day.”

“And why are others not to enjoy the beauty of the day as well as herself?” said he. “I understand it all quite well. Half an hour ago, having nothing on earth to do, the humour is to make playthings of her children, just like that poor child’s playthings, to be thrown aside,”—and the words “Trifling! Idle! Capricious!” were muttered in a contemptuous manner.

“Lisa is something more than merely trifling, idle, and capricious,” said Emilia, gravely.

“Perhaps so,” said he, turning away, but not leaving the nursery.

He began to walk up and down near the

place where Emilia, still soothing his infant, was standing.

“ *C'est egal.*—She may be ill-tempered, and exacting besides.”

“ And nothing else?” said Emilia, lifting up her head and looking at him, for she was hurt for her friend.

“ Nothing else that I care for. Such pretty butterflies please and amuse for an hour, and then their power is over. A man must esteem before he can *love*.—Yes, Emilia,” he added, coming suddenly up, and fixing his eyes sternly upon her. “ A man who has known what it was to esteem, and to be disappointed, has no indulgence to spare for triflers such as these.... He has needed it all, not to *curse* another.”

He turned away with a gesture of anger and despair.

She said nothing. He took two or three turns, and came to her again.

“ It was a brief infidelity—a folly, for which my life is not too much to pay—and my life is given : that is, all that external ceremonial of life which she, or any one such as she, has a right to claim. What pretension can she make

to the possession of my heart? She ought to have known it was not made for such a one as she is!"

And again he turned away, and walked hastily up and down the nursery; while Emilia, imprisoned by the children, pale, uneasy, sorrowful, and displeased, stood in a sort of doubtful embarrassment, uncertain what to say, or whether to speak at all.

He came up to her again, stood with his eyes fixed upon her, and said at last, in a deep, low voice—

“ Emilia !”

She shook her head. She would not look up and answer to that appeal, though her heart, in spite of all, trembled at the voice and name.

He turned away again; then he returned, took a chair, and sat down near her.

“ Why should I not do it now? I have longed—I have prayed for this moment. In the agony of my heart, I have thought—might I but once more see her—open my heart to her—tell her....”

“ No....no....no....you must not—you must

not," she said, rising up, and in excessive distress. "Do not mistake me—do not misunderstand my agitation. I have struggled long, but I have vanquished at last. The past must be as nothing—oh, let it be as nothing!"

"It is all I have left in life," said he.

"Do not speak in this way, pray, Colonel Lenox! Oh, Lenox!" she exclaimed, turning to him with a look of generous affection, while the tears rose into her eyes, "I have been miserable enough—greatly miserable! Let me not be so wretched as to believe that, when I cast myself away, I shipwrecked you! It has been a long, long struggle, Lenox—but it has pleased the Almighty at last to restore me to myself. For you!—oh, I thought that men got over these things more easily! I have suffered for myself—I did not think of you....!"

"No," he said; "*that* is plain enough to be seen."

She was silent, but her tears fell fast over her cheeks.

She felt his resentment deeply. All the circumstances of her melancholy story passed

rapidly through her mind — all she had suffered since they parted — the affection which now had succeeded to a more dangerous sentiment — the earnest desire for his happiness which she had ever felt! This covert reproach wounded her to the heart.

And then to see him so recklessly indulging in feelings, now so blameable — the injustice he was committing to Lisa — the careless defiance of all that was right in himself!

She endeavoured to compose herself, and then she said—

“It is true, Colonel Lenox — I will not affect to misunderstand you, nor will I reproach you. I do not know what claim you have upon me for explanation....”

“The claim of an exchange of hearts,” he said, almost fiercely.

“If there was an exchange,” said she, “I had no means of being assured of it.”

“Too true,” said he, with despondency. “There it was. I thought it was honourable and right not to endeavour to bind you by a promise—but I see you resented it.”

“Have you never heard what passed?”

said she, in a voice so low that it was almost inarticulate.

“I know you married a rich old man for his money,” said he, roughly; “that was all I ever knew; and the rest I never cared to know. Perhaps you love him now — the better for you. I wish I could follow your example.”

“I do respect, esteem, and honour my husband,” said Emilia, firmly. “He has been generous to me and mine in their utmost need. And, oh! if I might venture so far—why will you not—why do you not love the fair but too susceptible creature, who has given you her heart? Why do you not love Lisa?”

“Because I neither respect, esteem, nor honour her.—Oh, Emilia, it should have been *you*. With you, I was another man....with this idle and thoughtless being I am only an irritated, ill-tempered, heartless fool.”

“Ah, my Lisa! is it thus your love is returned?”

“Love!—Do you know where she is, and how she is employed at this very moment?”

“No,” said Emilia, faintly.

“Then learn.—She is listening to the flatteries, and worse than flatteries, of one of the most unprincipled men in London. And that in defiance of her husband’s commands and of her husband’s warning—and you can talk of her heart!....But I care not. Let her go her own way, and leave me to follow mine.”

“Ah, Colonel Lenox!” said Emilia, earnestly. “Is this you? Is Lisa in such frightful danger—is that young creature, so beautiful and so affectionate, who loved you once only too fondly—can she be, indeed, trifling at the edge of the horrible precipice—and can you, dare you speak in this utterly heartless manner! Forgive me,” she said, hurriedly, “if I speak too plainly—but, good heavens! if we should lose her! You said *now*. Where is she now? Why are not you with her? Forgive me again—but tell me only where she is, and, if you will not, I will follow her.”

“*I follow her!*” said he. “No; I have made up my mind upon that subject. The

woman who requires watching is not worth the labour.”

She was astonished at this speech. He saw that her colour was rising fast, and that she could scarcely answer for indignation.

“Nay,” said he, “do me justice at least. You should have been present yesterday when I remonstrated with her—you should have witnessed her insolent triumph over my jealousy, as she was pleased to call it—her contemptuous defiance of my advice and opinion.—I have given her up! I have long ceased to care what becomes of myself—I as little heed, now, what becomes of her.—We are both of us wretches—worthless, shipwrecked, and miserable wretches—and the sooner we make an end of this farce of constancy, perhaps, the better.”

There was something so utterly miserable in his countenance while these words of impatient desperation broke from him—something in the heated manner in which he pushed back his chair—so recalling those hasty expressions of resentment which she remembered

at the Oaks, that her heart was touched to the quick for him.

She left the side of the little bed, came up to where he sat, and said, kindly—

“I have known a great deal of sorrow since we parted. I am grown old in sorrow. May I speak to you as a friend—may I venture to tell you how very wrong I think you?”

“Tell me anything.—Speak to me for ever!” said he, passionately.

“Nay,” said she, drawing back, “it must not be in this manner—in this manner I dare not—I ought not—I cannot—I will not speak with you. It rests with yourself, Colonel Lenox, whether these are the last sentences we are ever to exchange—if *you* cannot imagine yourself in the presence of Mr. Danby, *I* will.”

“That is a mere conventional farce, Emilia,” said he, angrily. “I thought you had been above such affectation. What right has Mr. Danby?—*he*, at least never had your heart.”

“He has my hand—he has my duty—he has my esteem—and he has my everlasting

gratitude," said she, warmly. "He has loved me indifferent—he has sheltered me thankless — he has saved me when I was about to perish — and I am not going to forget him. I should be the very basest, meanest, most despicable creature on the earth," she cried, the generous tears rising to her eyes, "if I could suffer any one in the universe, in my hearing, to wrong or disparage Mr. Danby."

He was silenced. He turned away, mortified and disappointed.

"Enough," he said; "I know you at last. You never had a heart—you never knew what it was to have a heart: you are a cold, calculating, conventional being—and you call *that* morality!"

"I call it honour and gratitude," she cried, excited beyond her usual self: "And if you never knew me before, know me now.—But enough, as you say: we indeed have been mistaken in each other. I thought, foolish that I was! that we might have lived to encourage each other in the cheerful performance of our several duties.—I see I was, indeed, wildly romantic and miserably mis-

taken! How could I trust in man! or the child of man!"

He was struck and confounded; but he was trying again to speak.

"Say no more," said she. "I am too much hurried—too much excited, to listen as I ought—to one whom, perhaps, I have injured.—For *that*, if I have deserved your anger, I ask forgiveness.—Farewell, Colonel Lenox.—I was foolish and mistaken. I thought it would be different—I thought it would be quite different: but I was mistaken. Farewell, Colonel Lenox: henceforward, let us be as strangers."

And crossing the nursery with a firm but hasty step, she rang the bell for the servants, and immediately quitted the room.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Vous êtes dans une carrière
Où l'on ne se pardonne rien.

LAFONTAINE.

This was the unhappy scene to which Colonel Lenox had alluded.

The night before he had been with Lisa at a magnificent party given at Carlton House, where all the London world had been assembled; and where, - as a matter of course, the Duke had been numbered among the most elegant and distinguished men of the distinguished party.

Mrs. Lenox, dressed in the most beautiful and expensive manner which it was possible for London art and London extravagance to attain—her colour, just raised by the heat of

the room—her eyes more brilliant than the brightest of the spangled diamonds around—her air soft, languid, and interesting, was by the whole world's unanimous voice pronounced to be the most beautiful creature there.

Even the royal host had turned his discriminating eyes upon her, and had honoured her with a considerable portion of that attention, which was in itself sufficient to elevate any one to the very highest pinnacle of fashionable celebrity. The Duke was not insensible of the increased value the beautiful Mrs. Lenox was thus acquiring in the eyes of every one; and his vanity, and the sort of attachment he felt, were enhanced and excited by the idea of being singled out as the favoured of one, the admired of all beholders.

His attentions became more pointed than they had yet been; he seemed proud to announce himself as her captive; and devoted his attentions to her in a manner that could not but be observed by every one, as he evidently intended that they should be.

Lisa had been more vexed, offended, and

unhappy, during the preceding day, than usual.

Dressed in all her loveliness, she had consulted her large glass; the glass had told a faithful tale of extreme, of incomparable beauty.—She had gone down to join her husband, flushed with conscious charms; and feeling assured that at this moment, at least, he must admire her; that something of those days of love, after which her fond heart for ever yearned, must return; that for the instant, at least, she should find the lover in the husband restored.

He was sitting in her boudoir, reading; and on the sofa by his side lay her little dog. He had not laid aside his old custom of pulling at the dog's ears when he was thinking of something else.

Now he was deep in his book; I believe it was "Rocca's Spain," just then come out.

She came in, looking like the fairy queen herself—so soft and light was her tread; her figure all covered with white satin and the greatest abundance of delicate lace, and be-dropped, as it were, with diamonds, that

sparkled like morning dew; her handsome little page in his green velvet, carrying two wax lights, and walking before her; she came in, triumphant—delighted to know that he was there.

He did not even look up—he was busy at Ronda.

She felt a little annoyed, but went softly round, and laid the most beautiful white hand in the world upon the open page.

He did not even take up that pretty hand and kiss it as he removed it, as her busy heart told her he once would have done: he only said—

“Don’t!—How tiresome you are!”—pushed it away unceremoniously enough, and continued to read.

“And what a bear you are!” said she, hurt and disappointed; and as usual, alas! when hurt and disappointed, losing her temper; and, as usual, on losing her temper, becoming rude in her turn.

“You are very well bred,” said he, still without looking up, “to interrupt one who happens to be engaged in what interests him, in order to inform him of such an agreeable

piece of news. I wish you would spend your ill-humour upon your maid. She's paid to bear it." And he tried to read, but the ready colour flew into his face.

"If I am rude," she said, her colour rising fast and crimsoning her cheeks, "and ill-tempered, it's what I learn from the company I keep. The time was, and not long ago either, when all I said and did was right; and now, all I say and do is wrong—*then*, my hand put over the page of your odious book would not have put you in a passion."

"Passion!—Stuff!" said he, looking up at her at last; "*I* don't go into passions. It is a weakness I leave to you!—You come and put your hand very disagreeably, as I think, over my book, when I am reading—it *is* your pleasure, I believe, to interrupt every occupation that does not centre in yourself. I presume to push your hand away, and you choose to call me a bear for it; that's all. Your calling me a bear doesn't put me in a passion. I am getting well broken in to the hearing such pretty epithets." His indifference cut her to the heart.

“ Oh !” she could not help exclaiming, for the ten thousandth time, “ the frightful, frightful change !”

“ I’ll tell you what it is,” said he ; “ you never will learn to be reasonable.—You expect impossibilities, and you can’t have them. You cry for the moon, and think me the cruellest of wretches because I can’t give it you ; and won’t pretend that I can.”

“ Insulting !” cried she, walking about so suffocated with indignation and vexation that she could scarcely speak. “ Insulting wretch !—treacherous deceiver !—Oh, had I but known”

“ I will tell you what, Lisa, I am getting heartily tired of these scenes—I hate scenes. I know perfectly well what all this means. I was once a fool !—all men are fools in their turn—I was blindly in love with you. Every one, at some period or another, of his life is the victim of this brief madness ; but they are fools, indeed, with whom it lasts long. And now, because I am become a reasonable being, and no longer the willing slave, as in my days of folly, to every idle caprice of

yours, I am a wretch, and a hypocrite, and I know not what.—You are such a slave to your vanity and love of power, that you make yourself miserable, because you cannot preserve an empire which every rational creature knows exists but for the moment.—Because your husband is no longer your infatuated lover, but the reasonable being he ought to be, you choose to consider yourself as the most wronged and injured of women.—Let us have done with this nonsense.—Once for all, I say, I'm wearied of it."

Oh! Colonel Lenox, why had you not the kindness and the goodness to teach these harsh, unwelcome truths in words less cold and irritating? Why could you not more gently correct that heart, which, with all its imperfections, was filled with love most sincere for you? Why would you persist in misunderstanding it, and attributing to idle vanity what was only the mistaken claim of a too exacting attachment? But so it was—you were greatly wrong; you were cherishing in your heart the memory of another idol; you were bringing this young

and undisciplined creature into constant comparison with this ideal perfection; and all her waywardnesses, errors, and caprices, were exaggerated by the injustice. She had many faults; but, under this unfair proceeding on your part, she appeared to you to be made up of faults. You were contrasting her—beautiful, young, in all the elaborate elegance of her dress—with that pale and statue-like figure, so calm, so simple, so severe, whom you had seen sitting by her side in the park; and every charm she possessed was reversed to your diseased eye.

Her sweetness, her gaiety, her whim, her endless variety, on which once you had dwelt so passionately and so fondly, were now nothing but volatile, insipid idleness, and caprice.

Stung to the quick, she came hastily up to him, and said passionately—

“You hate me”

“No, I don’t at all,” said he, with a sarcastic smile; “but you are doing everything you can to make me”

“Am I?—very well. We shall see. There

are ways of becoming hateful—there *are* ways of stinging any man. The worm will turn at last. We shall see—we shall see !”

She turned away and walked up and down the room, fanning herself, till snap went the delicate carved ivory fan in her hands.

She flung it upon the floor, and trampled it under her feet.

“Childish !” he said, and bent down to his book, and began to stroke and pull the dog’s ears again.

“Let my dog alone,” said she pettishly, coming up to the sofa and taking the little creature in her arms; “It loves me.—You ought to hate it !”—and, bending her head over the little favourite, the abundant pearly drops fell upon the animal’s silken hair.

The tears did her good; the very holding of the little creature in her arms, which showed that love dogs so well know how to express, a love that has consoled many a forlorn and disappointed heart before—soothed her.

She became composed and quiet, and sat down in her arm-chair, holding the dog

in her arms and waiting for her carriage, without taking any further notice of the persevering reader opposite.

But she was deeply wounded; and the resentment which she had never been taught to conquer by reflection was embittering every feeling of her heart.

The carriage was announced; and, without saying a word good or bad, he rose, took her arm in his, put her into the carriage, and followed her.

Not one single syllable did he deign to utter as they went along; not one word of conciliation or kindness fell from his haughty lips; and, by the time they reached Carlton House, her colour was, I have said, high; her eye bright and almost flashing; and a spirit and animation in her whole demeanour, that rendered her incomparably beautiful, even in that most high and beautiful assemblage.

And was he not greatly to be blamed? who gave to the artful deceiver the great advantage of a contrast such as this, to all his persuasive flatteries? to that tenderness

which melted in his eye—to those tones that vibrated from his lips, telling the dangerous story of a heart devoted, passionately devoted, where another was so utterly indifferent and careless!—

She could not help casting a triumphant glance round the room, to see whether he observed her or not, and most surely there he was—he was standing in a remote part of the apartment, leaning against one of the windows, and was watching her, evidently with an expression of mingled alarm and displeasure. Presently he left the place he occupied, and glided to one much nearer.

She saw it—her eyes flashed with pleasure. Her heart beat high—her spirits rose. How she talked, and flirted, and coquetted with her dangerous companion! How charming she was! How really and truly enchanted was he!

Dating from that evening, a change came over him. He began, for the first time, for many years, to feel something like love on his part;—he began to be in danger of being himself enchained. The deceiver and the flatterer alone was exchanged for the still

more dangerous, the far more insidious beguiler — because the accents of truth and passion were beginning to fall from his lips; and the expression which spoke in his eye was not altogether feigned.

CHAPTER XLV.

I see a woman may be made a fool,
If she had not a spirit to resist.

SHAKSPEARE.

The next morning, Mrs. Lenox was sitting at her late breakfast, the enchantments of the evening still filling her fancy; those fatal accents still vibrating on her ear; her heart still drinking in the dangerous consolation of knowing that there was one whose passion vindicated the power of her charms from her husband's indifference — and ah! still far more delightful to the heart of woman, that *he*, the secret object even of this infidelity, that he did see and must see how others estimated that which he so carelessly disregarded. She was recollecting that expres-

sion of countenance which had betrayed him while leaning in the window; and her head reeled with triumph.

There she sat, upon that beautiful cushioned sofa, still alone, except for the faithful little dog by her side, sipping her tea, and smiling to herself. She was loveliness personified.

The door opened abruptly, and her husband walked in. He looked round hastily to see whether she was alone; then took a chair without ceremony, and sat down exactly opposite to her on the other side of the table.

He looked very much annoyed and discomposed; and his colour was high and his eyes excited.

She saw he was moved. She just glanced at him triumphant, and then, with a look the most demure in the world, resumed her teaspoon, looked down, and sipped her tea.

“There is not much encouragement,” he said abruptly, “to remonstrate with you; but, as I think it may be *just possible* that you are not exactly aware of the character of the man with whom you seemed upon such prodigiously good terms last night, I think,

as your husband, it is my duty to inform you."

"Really!" she exclaimed, with a look of affected surprise. "I am sure you are vastly good to me!"

"He's the greatest profligate about town."

"Dear me!" and she began in her turn to play off the indifferent; and bending over her little dog, she stroked his ears and kissed his head.

"Did you happen to know this before, Lisa?" he said, angrily.

"I don't know it now," she replied, looking up, innocent as a lamb.

"What do you mean by that?—Not know it now?—Do you pretend to doubt that I know well enough what's going on in society, and am a pretty good authority in such cases!"

"Oh! don't go into a passion.—I don't the least mean to take you for an ignorant innocent—far from that: I don't doubt your knowing, well enough, what's going on; but as for that one unfortunate object of your animadversions, I...."

"Well, what do you mean?"

“I beg leave to doubt your impartiality. Don't I, Fan-fan—my darling treasure of a Fan-fan—don't I, my pet, and most exquisite of puppies and spaniels?”

“My impartiality!—What nonsense are you thinking of? Please to put down that dog, ma'am, when your husband is talking to you.—Must you always be too silly to listen to a reasonable word?”

“I don't think it silly at all,” said she, looking at him with an air of the most provoking triumph, “not to listen to the idle calumnies of jealousy.—I think, in that case, wives had better think of something else, till the yellow fit is over. An't it so, Fan-fantaris—darling of darlings!” caressing and fondling it in her arms.

“Put that dog down—I insist upon it,” said he almost fiercely, “or I'll fling the brute out of the window.”

“Oh, do, by all means!....As you can't make me listen to reasonable words, by all means let us have reasonable actions....Why, are you not ashamed of yourself now, Colonel Lenox?”

She said this smiling in his face as playfully and as sweetly as she possibly could.

“Intolerable!” he cried, getting up and walking two or three times up and down the room to recover his composure; then he returned and sat down again, and looked at her steadily.

“Lisa,” he said, “listen to me.—I am content, in general, to act upon the plan which seems tacitly agreed upon between us. You go your way, I go mine: but your behaviour last night, let me tell you, neither accords with my honour nor your own; and, once for all, I beg we may have no more of it.”

“My behaviour last night!—Upon my word! Oh! you didn’t like it.—I suppose not. Nobody likes to find that others can prize what they have cast away. No one, I suppose, likes to find that one, fool enough as you said last night, once to love can have found sense enough to recover his or her reason!—Oh, no! by no means! that’s only proper for husbands—wives must be the humble, enduring slaves—happy if their lord condescends,

in his ineffable kindness, not to beat them. Everything less than that," cried she, firing, "I have endured from you; and it is the pride and joy of my heart to have made you jealous at last!"

"Jealous!" he cried, indignantly. Nothing stung his pride like the idea of being made jealous. Jealous of his own wife! Could anything on earth, in his opinion, be more thoroughly contemptible! "Jealous!"

"Ay, jealous!" she repeated, springing up, and dancing round him in the most provoking manner—"jealous as an orange, and quite of that *civil* complexion.' Oh, dear me! don't be afraid. I have a spirit—and the heart you have thrown away I have picked up; and perhaps—perhaps—but don't be afraid—I'll take care of its honour, poor fellow!"

"You had best," said he, absolutely gnashing his teeth with rage. "You had best. I care little for you—but I care for my honour; and if you smirch it, as sure as you stand there alive, I'll kill you!"

"La! what a horrid catastrophe! Smother me, like the brute black in the play!—your

poor lambkin of a Desdemona! No—no—no—never think of such wicked doings! You know, my dear, you'd get hanged for it."

"Lisa," said he, seizing her by the arm, and shaking her roughly, "have a care. You are provoking me beyond bearing, and you know you are.—I have only to say three words more.—I *insist* upon your breaking off this *liaison* with the Duke.—The eyes of all the world were upon you last night. He is, I tell you, a regular profligate.—It is infamous for any woman to appear upon such terms with him as you did.—I *command* you to put an end to it."

"And I won't, then!—There's a defiance, in answer to your commands. If you are mad with jealousy, I, thank Heaven! have preserved my senses.—I know what I am about. I know there's no harm in it; and I'm not going to set all the scandal-mongering world a talking. Nonsense! how can you be so absurd!—but I wish you'd let go my arm; you'll pinch it off, I think. Good heavens! you brute! what a place!—it's as black as a sloe."

And so the delicate arm was, as she pushed up the loose sleeve of her morning-dress, and displayed it before him.

He looked confounded.

“I beg your pardon, Lisa. I did not mean to hurt you; but you provoked me beyond my powers of endurance. I come to give you a warning as a friend, and you will persist in disregarding my counsel as merely that of a jealous fool.”

“And so I did! and so I do!” cried she, her eyes flashing with delight. “Ah, Lenox! You are not so insensible as you would pretend.”

Why did he not take the still devoted but most mistaken trifier to his bosom at this—press her to his heart, forgive, counsel, reason, command her?—One word of tenderness would have done anything with her; but his pride, his ill-disciplined pride, forbade.

He coloured as she spoke, was silent a few seconds, and then said, coldly—

“It is useless to reason with one who persists in mistaking everything that is said. I repeat, that I counsel you as a friend, and

command you as a husband — I will have no more of these sort of public exhibitions of yourself in company with that man.—Do you mind what I say ?”

“ And I repeat,” said she, her spirit again mastering her, “ that I will follow your counsel when I think it deserves attention ; but I appeal from Philip jealous, to Philip when in his senses ; and as for your *commands*, I defy them !—Pooh ! nonsense ! Do you think I mind such old wives’ stuff as that ?”

“ I have done, then,” said he, looking deeply offended, and rising from his chair. “ Let us live, as we part, as strangers.”

“ Lenox !”

But he would not turn back : he had left the room, and she heard him go down stairs.

Her carriage was at the door ; but, instead of going, as she had intended, to fetch Mrs. Danby, she gave orders to be driven into the Park, and that another carriage should be despatched for her friend.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Nay, we must think, men are not gods;
Nor of them look for such observances
As fit the bridal.

SHAKSPEARE.

She went into the Park ; it was still empty, and her little phaeton was driven into the wood.

Disappointed and depressed — all her vain and idle triumph over—there she sat, lost in musing, as the carriage drove slowly along.

She began to be alienated at last, in her turn—she began to despair of ever regaining her power over her husband's affections—she began to feel that real desolation which for so long had been only imaginary—she began to think with something of tenderness and gratitude upon him who offered his

adoration to one so mortified and forsaken—she began to parley with principles, which, however vague and unsettled upon points of the minor morals, had, till then, stood firm with her against what was obviously wrong—she began to ask herself those dangerous and casuistical questions which have upset so many in their life's career.

She began to question her duties—to talk to herself of nature, and the rights of the heart, and all those vain sophistications which have, alas! so often betrayed.

The passionate desire of revenge seemed the only sentiment remaining that might have told her how dear, in spite of all her resentment, Colonel Lenox was; and that her imagination was, even at this moment, occupied with the idea of paining him, rather than with that of being herself happy with another.

There was no one as yet in the Park; and, after about an hour's drive, she ordered her servant to return home, for her heart was yet full, and she longed to talk with Mrs. Danby.

She found Emilia walking up and down the drawing-room in Grosvenor Street, with

a colour raised, and an eye troubled as her own.

She was endeavouring to compose her thoughts: she was endeavouring, as it were, to stanch the wounds she had received. His words had been cruel and unkind beyond measure: she was trying to be just, and to forgive him. She was trying to remember that he had been disappointed, and that she had been inconstant; she was telling herself to be candid, and not resentful—to be compassionate, and not unjust. She was endeavouring to steel her heart against that fatal self-pity which would have quite unnerved her, and to bear to be unkindly treated by them all.

The door opened and Lisa came hastily in, and, seeing her alone, ran to her, flung her arms round her neck, and, as in the days of their early affection, burst into tears and sobbed upon her bosom.

Emilia put her arms round her, as when she was a child, kissed her, and soothed her with—

“What is the matter now, my sweet Lisa?”

“I am the greatest wretch this earth contains.”

“My love, don't say so! Nay, pretty one, don't think so!” she murmured, in such soft and kind tones, as if it were the good guardian angel of her spirit that spoke.

“I have told you so before, Emilia, and it is but too true,” said Mrs. Lenox, flinging herself upon the sofa, and covering her face with her handkerchief—“he hates me.”

“No, my love, he does not: believe me, sweet Lisa, he cannot—but you do not understand each other.... Have patience, my love.”

“I thought at last I had stung his proud heart to the quick,” said she, withdrawing her handkerchief from her eyes, and speaking warmly and indignantly: “and if he had possessed a heart not harder than the nether millstone, so I should.—I thought, if all other feeling was destroyed, at least I could wring his haughty soul with jealousy. I have not even the power to do that.”

“Jealousy!” repeated Emilia, taking her

hand. "Ah, Lisa! never—never—never try that wicked, dangerous game."

"And why not?" cried Lisa, withdrawing her hand: "is it not well?—is it not true?—is it not right?—that he should know that others can adore where he is so cruelly indifferent—and that it rests with me alone that I have not my full revenge?"

"Good heavens, Lisa! Is it possible!—can it be you who talk in this desperate and most improper manner?"

"Why should it not be me?—Did I ever pretend to be better than the rest of the world?—What reason on earth is there that I should?—I am sure I never learned anything but what was bad since I have been born. And am I not provoked beyond the endurance of woman? And why, pray, am I to be better than any woman breathing ever was, in my situation?—It's fine talking, Emilia—but you don't know what it is...."

"We all think our own trial the hardest," said Emilia, gently; "but, hard or not, we must bear what is imposed.—But as for what

other women would do. How can you, Lisa, indulge in such vain and idle talk? In the first place, you do not know what other women *would* do—and in the second, whatever they would do will neither excuse you in doing wrong, nor console you under the misery of wrong.”

“I don’t care for the misery! I dare say there’s misery everywhere. I am sure there is not a wretch on the face of the earth so miserable as I am at this moment...but I sometimes think,” she said, colouring, and in a low voice, “I am but a poor, weak fool to bear it.”

“Your words are all unintelligible to me, Lisa—I cannot understand you this morning.”

“It’s better you should not: you have troubles enough of your own, I am sure; and it’s a wretched thing in me to vex you with mine.”

“Nay, my love, you know but too well, almost my only happiness on earth is to be of use to you, my Lisa....And now, my love, may I take the freedom of a friend with you?—may I venture to speak as if we were still in that green walk at school, Lisa?”

“Say on,” said Lisa. “You are only too good to me.”

“Are you quite sure that the loss you regret of your husband’s heart may not in part arise from your *own* fault?”

“I did not think to hear that, at least, from *you!*” said Lisa, kindling, and withdrawing her hand abruptly. “No, I did *not* think—in spite of all I know—that you would take *his* part to my face, Emilia.”

And she turned from her.

Emilia was confounded.

“I know—I am sharp enough to see—I am not quite blind....”

“My Lisa,” was the answer, in a deep and sorrowful voice, “*then* all between us is at an end.—If you know me so little as this, it had indeed been better that we two had never met. You cannot—you dare not suspect me of unfair dealing between you and your husband.—It is impossible, Lisa!”

“Forgive me,” said the changeable and impressible creature. “I don’t know what I say: only, don’t take *his* part, Emilia. I can’t, indeed—I can’t bear that.”

“That is so childish....”

“Yes, *he* calls me childish....”

“So foolish, dear Lisa, to talk of taking parts. There are no parts here. All I wish is to see you both happy : and to observe you mistaking and misunderstanding each other, and the happiness of each so completely thrown away — and for nothing: it is a grievous sight.”

“It’s all his own fault — entirely his own fault. I could have loved him—I did love him—I do love him still, fondly, faithfully, tenderly; but heart of woman will not brook the way he treats me—nor will I.”

“And yet, Lisa, Colonel Lenox is neither an ill-natured man nor an unprincipled man, nor a foolish man.”

“But he is a heartless, treacherous, unfeeling man. Oh, Emilia, Emilia! If you had listened to those words of passion that once flowed from his lips — words such as I never heard but once since,” said she, colouring deeply, “you would understand the bitter, bitter change — to this rudeness and this insolent unkindness.”

“Men will be men,” was Emilia’s reply.

“If that it is to be men, they shan’t be so to me,” said Lisa, firing. “They may get those who will to bear it—I will not. I would not be a slave so base—no, not for the universe!”

“Not for peace—not for love—not for right?” said Emilia.

“I don’t know what you mean, after all; I don’t know what I can do better than I do do....”

“Could you not, Lisa, restrain your tongue—that tongue which ever ran so fast when you were excited? Do you not think, if you put a curb upon that vehement mode of expression that you have....And when, after all, he is in the right—he is warning you against a dangerous and vicious connection—against a man....”

“Oh! he has been telling tales, has he?—He has been calling upon you to interfere? He has condescended to complain? He is jealous, after all!—I know it!—I thought it!—say what he will, his proud heart is brought down to jealousy at last!”

“ Alas, Lisa! and can this be your purpose? —to wound, and offend, and alienate....”

But it was in vain—Lisa responded not to the gentle wisdom of her friend; she scarcely listened to the little lecture which Emilia so gently and so seriously administered. She would not listen—she did not wish to be convinced—she had unhappily gone so far in wrong that she began to hate the right.

She sat a little time struggling with her impatience—for she could not bear to be impatient with Emilia; at last she sprang up from the sofa, and said—

“ How qualmish, and whimperish, and nonsensical we all are this morning! Come, child, let us go somewhere and change the scene. Oh! let us go into the King’s Road, and buy flowers. I am so sick of that horrid park—I hate the very sight of it. Don’t talk to me any more just now, Emilia, about being good; for I am in a humour to quarrel with an angel to-day—and you are a very angel: and then, when I am cross with you it *does* make me so unhappy.”

And she kissed her.

Emilia sighed, and said no more.

She followed her lively companion almost passively to the carriage; for there was nothing she so much dreaded as letting her be alone; and yet she felt how useless was the watchfulness of a few hours when for so many she was left unguarded.

But the good seem impelled to do their best, however little that best may avail.

And so it was with Emilia: every five minutes she could call her own was bestowed upon her friend.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The world is full of troubles, horrors, slights ;
Wood's harmless shades have only true delights.

DRUMMOND.

Well had Emilia said she had put her trust in man, and the child of man, and her trust had betrayed her.

But there was one, a child of man, in whom she shall not find her trust betrayed. She had not seen him for many, many years ; but riding slowly up the park one day—paler and thinner than he used to be—but still the son of rural health and vigour, and mounted on a horse of uncommon beauty, she saw once more—Johnny Wilcox.

She wanted a friend—never in her life had she more wanted a friend than she did now.

In London a woman's whole course of action is impeded if there be no man on whose relationship she has a claim, to aid her or on whose friendship she can place undoubting confidence. She is in one large prison, walking about in fetters, unable to perform any action of weight or importance.

Emilia had begun to feel this want lately in its fullest extent. Ever since the sort of explanation, if it may be so called, which had passed between herself and Colonel Lenox, it had been as she had said; they had become absolute strangers; if they chanced to meet they never spoke — a cold salute was all that was exchanged between them. He looked haughtily and proudly resentful—she serene, frank, and determined. At last, Colonel Lenox suddenly left London. Her anxiety upon the subject of Lisa's conduct now increased every hour.

She was at this moment coming up the park in the carriage, which Mrs. Lenox had sent for her, as was now too often her custom, telling her she would find her in Kensington Gardens—gardens, the very name

of which Emilia detested—so often had she seen her leave them or enter them, in the hateful society of that most dangerous man.

She had resolved this day, that, if possible, instead of waiting in the carriage till Lisa left the gardens, she would herself seek her there; but could she venture in unattended and alone? She was hesitating what to do, when the figure of a young gentleman slowly riding up the park caught her eye.

Could it be he?

He was, as usual, mounted upon a fine horse; but there was so great an improvement in his appearance, that for a few seconds she hesitated in feeling assured that the gentlemanlike person she was approaching could be her old friend, Johnny Wilcox.

And yet, most assuredly, so it was.

The cheek was paler; the figure fined down, as the saying is; the whole appearance, dress, and manner, changed, from its former rustic homeliness, to one that spoke the man practised in and accustomed to company, and to the world. Still the same look of freshness, frankness, and kindness remained—there was

a something about him that could never be mistaken.

Her heart beat with pleasure at the sight—a pleasure so sweet, so pure!—It was like a restoration of the losses of the past, thus to see before her an old friend, endeared by so many recollections.

To catch his eye—to move to, and acknowledge him, was the work of a moment. Mr. Wilcox was at her side. Though others had found, or pretended to find it difficult to recognize her, *he* knew her at once; and the deep colour that suffused his cheek, and the hurried and stammering accents with which, immediately approaching the carriage, he accosted her, showed that he did; while the affectionate respect of his greeting proved to her, at the same time, that, however much altered with regard to the outer man, the heart of Johnny Wilcox was still the same.

“ I have so long despaired of ever seeing you again, Mrs. Danby,” he began. “ I have visited London every season since you left the country, and yet I never could meet you anywhere—and now I see you, I cannot think

how it can have happened that I have never met with you before."

"I live very much retired," she replied; "quite out of the regions of this pleasant life which you are all leading here—I might almost say I had been buried alive, till my friend, Mrs. Lenox, made me out—and she will insist upon my enjoying the fresh air of the park every day."

"She is right," said her friend, looking anxiously at her. "Ah, Miss Wyndham!—I beg your pardon—Mrs. Danby I mean—you do not look as you had used to do at the Oaks."

"Do not I? That is but an ill compliment, I fear;—though perhaps you do not mean it as one. No, London air does not particularly well suit me."

"And may I venture to ask—in what part of London might I be allowed to call?"

"I live in Chancery Lane, Mr. Wilcox; and should have the greatest possible pleasure in presenting you to Mr. Danby."

Mr. Wilcox coloured, paused, and then said—

“ I shall be happy to make the acquaintance of any one happy enough to stand in so near a relationship to you.”

“ You will be glad to make the acquaintance of so sensible a man, for your own sake, Mr. Wilcox.—You are one who will be able to appreciate the merits of Mr. Danby.”

He looked at her wistfully—he remembered the scene at the church-door—it had, indeed, been present to his mind ever since. He had understood the extent of the sacrifice, and the idea had well nigh driven him distracted.

To another—more distinguished—more deserving than he was—he had taught himself to say he could with pleasure resign her; but to lose her for such a one as he!—That thought had long fed in secret upon the spirits and paled the ruddy cheek of Johnny Wilcox.

“ Yes,” she said, understanding, but not appearing to understand his gaze. “ Yes,” in that direct manner in which she made it a law to herself to speak of her husband; “ you will appreciate Mr. Danby, and he will appre-

ciate you ; for he loves all that is simple and sincere.”

It was enough—as with Colonel Lenox, so with Johnny Wilcox—whatever they might choose to think, they felt that Mr. Danby must be respected before his wife.

The proud and selfish Colonel Lenox was irritated and offended. The good and generous Johnny Wilcox was relieved and comforted to find how it must be.

They spoke a little of the weather, of the fullness of the town, of this and that carriage which drove by ; and then, insensibly, they slid into a talk upon more interesting things.

“ And the poor Oaks—what has become of them ? I really, Mr. Wilcox, since I left them, have not been able to speak upon the subject till I met you. You had something of the same feeling for them, and for those who inhabited them, that I have. How is it with the poor Oaks ? Has any one got it who loves it for ? or is it all cut down, defaced, and *improved* ? ”

“ Not the least in the world improved, Mrs. Danby ; an old gentlewoman has bought

it, who is a great invalid and keeps her room, so she takes no pleasure in altering or improving; which some think a pity, but which I, for my part, am very glad of. Just about the house it's kept neat enough, but the rest looks very wild. However, I don't dislike it so — there is something in the gloomy wildness of those dark, untrimmed walks and woods, that harmonizes with my feelings when I go there. You know I cannot express myself well,—but it seems *in tune* with my mind when I go there.”

“ It would be in tune with mine too,” said she. “ Thank you, Mr. Wilcox: I am very foolish about the Oaks.—It is a pleasure to me to fancy them so.”

“ The whole country is altered to my eye in the same manner—the whole neighbourhood is grown very dull and gloomy. I could fancy the very cry of the hounds was different, but I don't often go a-hunting now.”

“ Don't you?—You used to be so very fond of it !”

“ Ah, Miss Wyndham ! those were sweet autumn mornings when we rode out, and

brushed away the dew from the sweet hanging hazel and birches, as we cantered over the turf through the copses, the huntsman's horn sounding, and the cry of the dogs! Do you remember how fond you used to be of those sounds?—and the many pretty lines we used to repeat to one another as we rode along? I often think that Heaven itself cannot be better than that used to be—but it's all changed now.”

“ You must not remind me of such things, Mr. Wilcox,” said she, her colour rising. “ I was made for the woods; and now I live in this great town, I do not venture even to think of them.—I am in danger of that disease which, I believe, the sailors feel, who are perishing of drought at sea, and the green savannahs and the limpid fountains swim before them.—Let us talk of something else. Do you amuse yourself well in town?”

“ Pretty well — for somehow or other I know a good many people; but I care very little for shows and pictures.—My principal pleasure is riding up and down the Park. I go to a good many parties of an evening:

and I go to the 'play most nights. I was always very fond of a good play."

"I have not seen one since I came to London."

"What a pity is that!—You would enjoy a good play, with your fine taste for these things. But why do you not go?"

"Mr. Danby is so much occupied that he has no time to go with me," said she. "That is the only reason, I believe."

"Ah, Mrs. Danby, might I be so happy! And I dare say," said he, suddenly brightening at the idea, "I really might sometimes be of use to you.—I know that you fine ladies cannot walk about this great town, or go to see any of these things without the attendance of some gentleman, who is so idle he has nothing else to do.—Now that is just my case, if you would only make use of me."

"Thank you, Mr. Wilcox, you are always so obliging and kind. If you are not particularly engaged at this very moment, I feel much inclined to profit by your good will. Would you take a turn with me in Ken-

sington Gardens? I very much wish to walk there, and particularly dislike to go in quite by myself."

The brightest ray of pleasure which had been seen there since the fatal morning of Miss Wyndham's marriage danced in Johnny's eyes.

"You cannot mean to be so extremely good! Will you really allow me the great pleasure of a walk with you? It will be like old times. Here—this gate—this is where we must go in. Stay—let me have the pleasure of handing you from your carriage. Take care of your beautiful white dress against the wheel.—I remember you always used to like to be in white."

They entered the Gardens.

It was a warm, sultry day, and the heavy, magnificent trees flung their dark shadows upon the shining grass, and bright, glittering waters. Numbers of people were in the Gardens, which were echoing with the music of the bands. It was a gay and beautiful scene, as it ever is.

"I always think this the most beautiful

thing about London, after all," said the denizen of the woods; "there is nothing, in my opinion, the least to be compared with this.—It puts one in mind of the Oaks.—I could fancy I was at the Oaks."

Emilia smiled. "The Oaks was never quite so well peopled, except by the rooks, and doves, and singing birds.—I cannot say that it is very like the Oaks, and I cannot say that I like it quite so well; but it is very pleasant."

She endeavoured to keep up a conversation with her companion, but her eye was wandering over the Gardens all the while, in search of some one—in vain.

She glanced through every brilliant group; she examined every party sitting upon the benches; she stood watching those who passed and repassed before the band—those she sought were not there.

"I should like to get more into the shade," said she, "the sun is so hot and glaring."

And she led the way to a more retired part of the Garden. In vain! She was about to quit it in despair, and to return to the carriage; when, sitting upon a solitary bench

under a tree, she found those she was in search of.

In a beautiful dress of lilac silk, richly trimmed with the finest lace, her delicate bonnet covered with a veil which softened every feature, and half hid the dark beauty of her hair, she sat,—her head bent down and half averted, apparently employed in watching and playing with her little pet dog; his neck was adorned with a crimson ribbon and bow, to which a long ribbon was attached, which she held in her hand and kept swinging up and down, her eyes bent all the time upon the beautiful and wilful little animal—but leaning over the bench behind her, his arms folded and resting upon it, was one who seemed anxiously and earnestly addressing her not unwilling ear.

The tall, elegant figure, and the handsome but to her most displeasing face, were recognized at once.

Emilia did not hesitate a moment, but quickened her pace and advanced.

She had neither false shame nor false timidity.

She stepped hastily and courageously up to interrupt the conversation, with—

“ I have been searching for you in every place, Lisa : your carriage is waiting, and one of your children is not well.”

Lisa started up—coloured—did not seem to know whether to look ashamed, angry, in defiance, or in submission.

“ Surely you are not going away so soon this heavenly day !” drawled the Duke, looking at her languidly, but in a manner rather dictating than beseeching ; “ you will not—I am sure you will not.”

He looked up as he spoke ; and, to the surprise of Emilia, after a slight salute to herself, nodded to her companion, with—

“ Ha, Wilcox !—how long have you been in town ?”

Then, turning again to Mrs. Lenox, in a sort of haughty defiance, as it were, of Emilia, he began again to plead for a little further delay.

Lisa looked uncertain. She rose up—hesitated—sat down again, with—

“ It is very sweet ! But, indeed, I ought to go—indeed, I must go.”

Which kind of hesitation was speedily put an end to by Emilia placing her arm resolutely under her own, and saying—

“ You will come with me, I am sure, Lisa,” in a low, but determined voice : “ I am certain you will not refuse to come with me.—Mr. Wilcox, which way must we go to the carriage?”

And taking his arm, she dragged, rather than drew, Mrs. Lenox away.

The young nobleman rose indolently from his seat, and took the place by Mrs. Lenox’s side.

“ I suppose I may see you out of the Gardens?” said he ; and whispering, yet scarcely condescending to heed whether he was overheard or not—

“ What, in the name of Heaven, can give that Chancery Lane woman a right to meddle with you ?”

“ It’s Emilia !” said Mrs. Lenox, hurried and confused : “ I am always used to do what Emilia says.”

“ Upon all possible occasions ?” — he asked, looking at her, and smiling.

“ Yes, upon all. Don’t tease me now. For goodness sake go away now.—I am so nervous and uncomfortable, don’t speak to me. I am sick of the very sound of your voice.”

“ Very well—I will not trouble you to hear it; but I suppose I may see you to your carriage?—or must I surrender all my pretensions to that young gentleman, who, just redeemed from the woods, seems already more successful in his enterprises than my most unfortunate self.”

She laughed, and looked at Mr. Wilcox.

And so they walked out of the Gardens and reached the carriage, and after placing them in, with much assiduity, the gentlemen re-entered the Gardens, and the ladies pursued their drive.

“ I wish I knew who that quiz—whether old maid or young wife—might be, who has gained such a nonsensical influence over Mrs. Lenox,” said the Duke, half aloud, half to himself. “ Perhaps,” he added, turning carelessly round, “ you, Wilcox, who seem to be

in such high favour, will please to expound the matter to me?"

"I don't suppose it would enlighten you, Duke, very much, if I were to tell you her maiden name.—She was a Miss Wyndham, of the Oaks, and once the beauty of our county. She married a man much older than herself. We used to be very well acquainted in former days. She often rode to the meet."

"And you with her, lucky fellow, no doubt! —I could find in my heart to be envious, if your 'Delia' were not so horrid ugly."

The colour flew into Mr. Wilcox's cheek, but he had discretion enough not to debate a matter of taste: so he made no reply.

The Duke lounged idly along. Presently he said—

"Mrs. Lenox lived in that neighbourhood before her marriage, I think; so I suppose this most incongruous association of Chancery Lane and Grosvenor Street arises from some bread and butter friendship or other.—It's very pretty to see the constancy of you country people; but faith, Johnny, I thought you had a better taste."

“ You know I do not pretend to be a judge of these things. I have ridden side by side with Miss Wyndham ever since she was nine years old.—I always thought her very handsome, and I think her so still ; but I never thought so much about beauty as some do.”

“ Well, Master Wilcox, if you are inclined to play the part of a friend by me, I may do as good a turn by you some day or other. The next time she goes a-hunting with you, put her on the wrong scent—that’s all—for she’s likely to be desperately in my way.”

“ Whatever Emilia Wyndham happens to be in pursuit of, I know to be a just and worthy object, and I shall always help her in everything in which she may employ me, and to the very best of my power—and so now, Duke, you understand me, and I wish you a good morning.”

And Mr. Wilcox, leaving a companion he neither loved nor respected, was soon upon his horse, going slowly down Rotten Row, and meditating upon the unexpected rencontres of the morning.

The Duke, too well bred and too well disciplined to fret or go into a passion when he was baffled, just hummed the resemblance of a tune, as he walked away to his carriage, while the following scene was passing between Emilia and Lisa.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude.

MILTON.

“ Friends get officious,” said Lisa, falling back in her carriage as soon as the gentlemen were gone, and looking as black as midnight. “ I wonder whose pleasure it is to set you as a spy upon me ?”

“ My own,” said Emilia.

“ Then I wish you would learn not always to consult your own pleasure. Once for all, I tell you, I do not like it.”

“ You must forgive an old friend—almost a mother, Lisa. I presume with you, I know, but not all your offended looks, be angry as you will, shall make me play the false and traitorous part of hiding that truth which I ought to tell you.”

“ Truth ! I’m quite sick of your truths. I have heard nothing from your lips but truths, as you call them, these hundred years. I wish, for the sake of variety, you would indulge me with a few pleasant lies—that would be quite refreshing.”

“ Then I will,” said Emilia. “ You are perfectly right to please yourself in every thing you do, and to disregard the wishes of your husband and the counsels of your friends ; for what concern has anything so perfectly enchanting and beautiful as you are with right and wrong — duty, propriety, or any such antiquated stuff ?

“ You are perfectly justified — you, the wedded wife of another man—perfectly justified, because that man is peevish, careless, and, I own it, unkind to you, in seeking revenge by casting aside every consideration of prudence and honour, and flinging yourself, with reckless defiance, into that awful and destroying fire—fire far more dreadful than the flames of the stake—the unholy devouring fire of sin ! Of course no one can deny that to gratify your just resentment, young, and

thoughtless, and inexperienced as you are—that you are perfectly justified in trusting yourself with one, notorious as a flatterer, a liar, and a betrayer—that you are quite justified—you, the mother of infant children, in blemishing, by your careless indifference, your own reputation and your husband's name—that name which must descend to those children. Yes, Lisa. You would not listen to my unpleasant truths—listen to my pleasant falsehoods.”

Her colour was high. She spoke warmly—almost passionately. To find her thus trifling with her own good name and fame—standing upon the very brink of the most dangerous of precipices—tampering with all that was evil, merely to revenge herself upon one who, in spite of his faults, she knew had deserved a better fate—excited her indignation to a degree that she neither felt the power nor the desire to repress.

For once she would try what the energetic expression of truth undisguised might do.

“Don't speak to me in that ironical manner, if you please,” was Lisa's haughty reply. “I am not used to it, and I won't bear

it. I've enough of that from your charming Lenox. I'm not going to take it from you."

"You know you are wrong, and that makes you so impatient of reproof, Lisa.—But, good heavens, what a contemptible wretch should I be if I could soften the matter to you now!"

"Soften or not soften, just as you please. I hope I can take care of myself.—I am neither a child nor a fool; and if I choose to amuse the hours which *he* throws upon my hands in my own way, I don't see that *he*, or any one else, has a right to reprove me for it."

"Amuse yourself!...Good heavens, what an amusement, Lisa! Dear innocent—still innocent Lisa, for the love of Heaven think what you are about—think of your pretty children—of your husband—of yourself—your reputation—your father—and your Emilia."

"Well, don't I think of them? You don't think I am going to run away with this man, I suppose?"

"Heaven forbid! But this I *do* think, that you are ruining your good name—you are forfeiting the esteem of your husband

—you are forgetting your children — you are neither mother, wife, nor friend, under the influence of this fatal infatuation; and yet, thanks be to Heaven! you care no more for that man, than for the idlest flatterer that ever handed you from your carriage. Oh, Lisa! will you peril the loss of Lenox for ever, for the sake of such a creature as that?”

“Lenox! Lenox! Lenox! — Oh yes, I know very well, it’s all Lenox. You care for his little finger aching more than for the whole of me. I might be as bad as I pleased, and much you would care, if Lenox’s honour and happiness were not in jeopardy!—You need not be afraid for me. I’ll take care of myself; but, thank Heaven! as you say, and I do most fervently thank Heaven, his honour is in my keeping if his happiness be not; and I’ll make him quake for *that*, at least before I have done with him.”

“This is too shocking—too shocking, indeed,” was Emilia’s reply.

She really could say no more.

They arrived at the door of Colonel Lenox’s house in silence. When the carriage stopped

Emilia, for the first time, felt that she did not like to enter without an invitation; yet she longed to go up-stairs, and visit the children. It was true one of them was seriously ill.

Lisa got out—Emilia remained seated:

“ Ask Mrs. Danby,” said Lisa to her footman, “ whether she wishes to go home, or whether she will not just come in for five minutes.”

Emilia followed her into the drawing-room. Lisa shut the door, then turning round, said—

“ I know I have done wrong. I beg your pardon for my passion, Emilia, but don't speak ill of *him*, I won't bear it. Faults he may have—sinful he may be; but he loves me, and that is what none of the rest of you do, I believe,” she added bitterly.

“ Not even *I*?” said Emilia, kindly putting her arm round Lisa's waist. “ Oh, Lisa, forgive me if I spoke roughly and plainly; perhaps,” said she smiling yet sadly, “ I have learned it from Mr. Danby who never disguises what he thinks ought to be known. But I cannot bear to hear you talk so. *He*

love you, who is luring you to destruction ! He puts me in mind of that story we read when children, of a fair apparition that appeared to men in the woods, and tempted them forward till they fell over a precipice, and perished.—He loves you in that way, believe me, Lisa.”

But it is wearisome to repeat arguments pleaded over and over again, and equally pleaded in vain.

After a long fruitless effort, Emilia, anxious to visit the child, proposed to go into the nursery.

The poor little boy was very ill, and was sitting upon nurse’s knee, leaning his feverish head and hot face against her bosom.

“What’s the matter with my pretty fellow?” said Emilia, who went immediately up to him ; while Lisa, struck with a sudden pang of remorse, such as she had never felt before, stood looking darkly at a little distance, and did not utter a word.

The poor little boy raised his languid head, signed with his little hand, and said, “Mamma !”

The infant, just then brought in by the under-nurse, spread forth its little arms, and crowed to come to her.

Lisa glanced at Emilia—knelt down by the poor, sick child, seeming ready to devour him with kisses—then rose, caught up the little baby, and huddled it to her bosom—her colour coming and going—her gestures passionate—her tears struggling into her eyes.

And yet, that very night all was again forgotten—at a splendid concert which she was attending, she had eyes, she had ears but for one.

When Emilia entered her own house, late, as was now too often the case, she found, as usual, her father and her husband sitting in the little drawing-room, waiting her return for dinner.

She had run hastily up stairs, provoked again to be after her time, and yet, in the complication of her duties and interests, finding it impossible to regret that she had been away so long. She entered with the pretty elegant bonnet upon her head, which Susan had pro-

vided, and looking so well dressed and so handsome, that she was scarcely to be known again.

The eyes of her father gazed upon her with a quite new pleasure, as he said—

“ I protest, Emily, I shouldn't know you again, you look so different; just as you used to do at the Oaks, before your poor mother went away. I have never thought you were quite the person—it has puzzled me many a time in bed to think—were you the person, or were you *not* the person—so grave, so pale, so ugly, and so dowdy, as you have been looking. But now I see you *are* the person, you *are* my handsome Emily again. So come and give your poor father a kiss, for I am so glad of it.”

She gave him a hasty kiss upon the forehead, and then went up to her husband with,

“ Will you be so very good as to forgive me again, Mr. Danby; indeed, I am quite ashamed to take such advantage of your patience and indulgence.”

“ Are you indeed?” he said, fixing upon her his deep, penetrating eye.

“ Indeed, and indeed I am,” she replied, stretching out her hand to the bell. “ Pray, Sally, let us have dinner.—Shall I have time to take off my bonnet, or will you be so good as to excuse me as I am ?”

He sat in his large chair, his eyes following every gesture ; he thought in the whole course of his life he had never seen her look so charming : every succeeding day, in truth, was adding to her charms. Occupied with those serious interests which took her out of herself ; satisfied with her own heart ; at peace with her own conscience ; every day feeling more and more at ease with her husband ; and that very consciousness giving an inexpressible grace to her manner with him ;—the sweet fresh air and pleasant exercise she enjoyed, restoring the bloom to her cheek ; softened and rendering her more interesting than she had ever been in her best days :—Emilia was indeed a charming creature—let the Duke say what he would.

You may imagine the horrible struggle of feeling within Mr. Danby’s heart,—more than ever enchanted, more than ever fasci-

nated, by that charm which exercised such inconceivable influence over him — and yet resisting every sentiment of tenderness under the conviction that all that fatal loveliness which he sickened with very delight at beholding, sprang from the influence of and was lavished upon another.

That every one of these visits—from which she returned refreshed, and in all the pure brightness of an innocent heart—was only a step in the progress of that fatal alienation from himself, which might finally terminate—he shuddered to think how.

He was sitting with an envelope closed, but the seal broken in his hand, and looking serious; but as one who had made up his mind to the passive endurance of every evil that could be heaped upon him, he said—

“ I have to beg your pardon, Emilia ; I very inadvertently this morning opened this envelope. I know not why it was sent up with my letters to my chambers ; it was not till I had broken the seal that I found it was for you.”

Emilia opened it—there was a card of invitation; and a tiny note in Lisa's hand.

“ Now, Emilia, you positively *shall* indulge me this time. That old hobgoblin of yours must learn reason. This is to be such a fête as has not been seen this season!—no, nor for ten thousand seasons!—It is in the morning, too: that is, it begins in the morning—with a breakfast at S— House, and in the evening there will be a masquerade at the Argyle Rooms. Captain Greville is a delightful creature to let us have one—~~is~~ isn't he?—It will, I tell you, be such a thing as never was seen before—and now you *will* come—I see you looking so good, and so refusing; but tell Mr. Danby I will kill him if he does not let you come...but he's such an ill-natured old hunk, I dare say he won't....”

“ The card is....” said Mr. Danby; “ but you need not tell me, I read the card—but be easy—I did *not* read the note...”

And he could not help looking as if he very much wished to read it.

“ Lisa writes in such a nonsensical manner,” said Emilia blushing and putting the note into the fire, “ that I am really ashamed to let any one see her letters... .”

But the eyes of Mr. Danby were fixed upon the paper as it caught the flame, curled, blazed up—vanished. He made a sort of snatch, as if he would have saved it, but she did not see this,—and he sank back again into his chair.

“ Well,” at last he said after a few moments silence, “ of ^{*}course you wish to go—”

“ Not, I am sure,” said Emilia, with much gentleness, “ if you wish me not to go.”

Dear good Emilia—was that *quite* true?

“ I wish,” he said, peevishly, “ it were possible to make you speak the truth at once.... Cannot you say that you do not care a d—for me or my wishes — and that you have determined within yourself to go? You know I always did hate these womanly manœuvres; why in the name of all that’s good, must you for ever be trying them upon me?”

“ Well, I think that’s a very cross speech, Mr. Danby,” said poor Mr. Wyndham, whose eyes had opened wide at this address, and at the harsh, angry manner in which it was uttered. “ I don’t know what is come to you of late ; but I think you’re grown very cross with my poor Emilia — and with me too — and, perhaps, it is that you’re tired of us both — and so let us go away again to the Oaks — for if you don’t want us, I’m quite sure we neither of us want you.”

“ Hush !—hush, my dear beloved father !” cried Emilia in the greatest distress—but he would not be silenced.

“ I can’t bear to hear it,” he went on—“ and you looking so pretty in that nice new bonnet ; and so good-natured as you always are—I will say *that* — and he to take you up in that cross way — I don’t like it, Mr. Danby — I don’t like it. I’m but a poor creature, I know ; but I’m her father, and I don’t like it.”

“ You need not be so anxious to stop his mouth, Emilia—*he* at least speaks the truth — it may be bitter—but at least, it is sincere

—Nay, sir — speak out — you think me cross as you call it — and unkind to your daughter — I dare say I am—”

“ No, that I am sure you never intend to be — if it were not for this fatal habit of misunderstanding every thing I say and do. I do not know what I have done to displease you so much — perhaps you think that I am too much away from home—but if you knew —if I could tell you....”

“ To be sure,” said Mr. Wyndham, “ if she could tell you — why to be sure — *that’s* the company she has been used from her childhood to keep. We always kept such company at the Oaks—and I never yet have exactly understood why we don’t keep it now. Don’t cry and don’t look so vexed, Emilia, I never did understand it, I say. Why we are always here and with company so unfit for us,—and that Mrs. Lenox too, that I hear you talking of—there was a Colonel Lenox too—your poor mother’s nephew or cousin — I remember all about it — I can’t think why you *never* mention him—”

Emilia’s face was now crimson with agita-

tion and distress. *He* read in it the hue of conscious guilt.

“ My dear, dear father. Do not talk so—you know we agreed never to talk of the Oaks—you know Mr. Danby is the kindest friend we ever had. You know this is our home—and a very comfortable home for us both. And as for Colonel and Mrs. Lenox, they are nothing to either of us now.”

“ A lie !” muttered Mr. Danby between his teeth—not so loud however that the ungenerous sentence could be heard.

“ Dinner is ready, please, ma’am,” said Sally, opening the door. And they all three went down into the dining-room—the question of the acceptance as yet undetermined.

Emilia was hurt at what had passed. Grieved, and almost offended to perceive the effect which the childish and thoughtless prattle of her poor father produced upon her husband’s temper, she thought it unworthy of him to resent upon her this incoherent talk—she little knew how much meaning it conveyed to his mind.

The only way in which this feeling how-

ever displayed itself was by a determination not to allude to the invitation again; and not to accept from Mr. Danby an indulgence it evidently displeased him so much to grant.

This was the most uncomfortable dinner they had yet passed together.

Mr. Danby was more moody than ever—Mr. Wyndham angry and muttering—Emilia herself displeased and cold.

This completed the sum of Mr. Danby's wretchedness. She was displeased—he saw it. He thought all the right was on his side—he believed her to be attempting to dupe and to betray him—yet she looked displeased, and for the first time—and he felt as much annoyed, and as much depressed, and almost as much afraid as if there had not been the slightest cause for his distrust or resentment.

It was very well for you, Mr. Danby, that you fell into the hands of so high and generous a temper; a woman who would have condescended to play tricks with you might have made you—sensible man, and determined man, and clever lawyer as you were—

the veriest slave that ever bowed to the distaff.

She was far as Heaven is above earth from such mean and dishonourable ways. She had so little female art in her composition, that she did not even surmise her power, as he sat eyeing her askance, and looking as if he did not know exactly what to do.

As soon as the dinner was over, and before the cloth was removed, he rose and went away. And the subject was not renewed in the evening.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Alas! how changed from the fair scene,
When birds sang out their mellow lay,
And winds were soft, and woods were green,
And the song ceased not with the day.

LONGFELLOW.

The next morning no carriage came for Emilia: It had happened so once or twice before; but, after the conversation of yesterday, she could not but think it ominous, and feel uneasy and disappointed.

The note accompanying the card she saw was dated two evenings before, and had been left in Chancery Lane, according to the convenience of one of Colonel Lenox's servants, late in the following day. Its tone, therefore, was no proof of the present disposition of its fair inditer. Emilia wished to thank her for the kindness of endeavouring to procure her the pleasure, which, as far as the

morning party was concerned, she could not help very much desiring to share. She was anxious to see Lisa in society, to judge for herself of her situation and manners; for though her remonstrances had yesterday been so ill received, still she could not think it possible that they would be altogether disregarded.

She was walking up and down her little room meditating upon all these things, when she heard horses coming up the street, and a knock at the door.

Sally appeared, the bearer of a gentleman's card—Mr. Wilcox.

“Oh! show him up immediately.”

Mr. Wilcox, hat in hand, and the colour as of former times in his face, now entered the room.

He was not yet quite master enough of himself to meet Emilia without emotion; but he struggled hard with his feelings, and, in a few seconds, looked as he wished to do.

He could not, however, forbear glancing round the apartment as he sat down. How cheerless it was!

Two very small windows, of the worst possible glass, let in the light upon a small square room, wainscoted with a wood that had once been painted white, but which the long course of years had rendered tawny; a few mahogany backed and black horse-hair seated chairs were ranged round the room; a square table, covered with a green cloth, stood in the middle; one of those round, concave glasses—invented, I cannot tell for what reason—was at one end; and a picture, so black that, except for one or two brownish lights, it might have passed for no picture at all, was on the other. There were two large arm-chairs for the two gentlemen; and a small foot-stool of needlework, the property of Emilia; on the chimney-piece, a very pretty glass, a present from Susan, was, by Susan's care, daily replenished with fresh flowers. This was the only little object of taste in the room.

Emilia had, at the beginning of her marriage, felt too utterly depressed and miserable to take heed of esteemed things; afterwards, perhaps, she would have taken some interest in making this little den more cheerful and comfortable, but, as Mr. Danby never chose

to leave home, and seemed quite to dread the consequent disarrangement whenever painting or papering was alluded to, she had gradually abandoned the idea of it, till her eye had become, as every eye does become at last, accustomed to the dinginess of the scene about her, which, nevertheless, had its effects upon her spirits.

Il y toujours dans la degradation un malheur sourd dont l'on ne se rend pas compte.

And so it had been with her. She got accustomed to this sordid manner of living; but, without accounting for it to herself, she was depressed by it.

Mr. Wilcox's glance round the room recalled to her the state of things about her;—she smiled a little, and said—

“We must not expect the Oaks in Chancery Lane, Mr. Wilcox.”

“No, madam, certainly not!” he said, still looking uneasily about him, ashamed of what he was doing, and not knowing exactly what to say.

“It is strange,” she said, “and it is happy, how soon the eye accommodates itself. I had forgotten all this.”

“I think it is a pity that when there are so many cheerful and pretty houses in this town, that a man of Mr. Danby’s fortune does not. . . .”

“He likes to live near his chambers. . . . Have you been into the park this morning?”

“No; as soon as I mounted my horse, I came down to pay my respects here.”

“Then you have not chanced to see Mrs. Lenox this morning?”

“No, Mrs. Danby—I wanted very much, if I might take the great liberty, to speak to you upon the subject of Mrs. Lenox.”

“Say on,” said Emilia.

“Are you acquainted with the character of the young nobleman whom we found sitting by her in Kensington Gardens yesterday. . . . And do you think that she can possibly be?”

“I do not know much of him, of course: I have only seen him once or twice. What I have heard of him was not in his favour. I do not know why I should have been surprised, but I was surprised to see him acknowledge you as an acquaintance.”

“I told you that I had got to know a

many people, someway, since my poor mother's and father's deaths. — I have had nothing else to do, and have gone a good deal into company. But I used to meet the Duke of C. down in Herefordshire — at the meets; he was always fond of pursuing something. Now it would be a fox—now a pursuit not quite so innocent.”

He stopped a little — then, leaning forward, he said very seriously—

“Nothing could possibly grieve me more than to see that beautiful creature, Mrs. Lenox, drawn into an acquaintance with him — I mean such an acquaintance as there appeared to be yesterday. I am sure, if she knew the tears that man has caused to be shed, she would have more care not to become a new victim to his rage for conquest. And I much wonder that Colonel Lenox, who ought to know better, allows the acquaintance. I do happen—which seems odd, moving in such different circles as we seem to do — I do happen to know a good deal of that young man. I am sure any of the details would be disgusting and painful to you; but

indeed — indeed, Mrs. Danby, you ought to set her upon her guard against him.”

“I have heard something of this,” said Emilia, more and more alarmed. “I believe Colonel Lenox. . . .”

“Can Colonel Lenox possibly be aware of this intimacy and not forbid it? Indeed, Mrs. Danby, I am astonished at what you tell me. Colonel Lenox married to so very beautiful—and forgive me, for you are her friend—so very, very careless a young lady as Miss Hesketh used to be, ought to be more careful what acquaintance he allows her to form. I am astonished at him! He is a man who knows the world—he must be infatuated—I am astonished at him!”

“It is indeed very wrong, *if* he knows. . . .”

“If!—oh, Mrs. Danby! the matter is too notorious. He knows—he must know—I thought he was a man of honour—what must we think of him?”

Emilia was excessively shocked; there was something terrible in seeing the subject thus presented. Her indignation and grief were nearly equal. How could he indeed!—

How could Colonel Lenox — the man she had once known so different — how could he have become so dreadfully changed, so blind to his first duties? — so cruelly negligent of the virtue and happiness of the young creature committed to his guardianship?

“I am not much of a judge of these things,” said Mr. Wilcox; “but to me it appears a most heartless and unprincipled thing to see any creature, far more one’s own wife, trifling on the very brink of destruction, and not to snatch her from it, cost what it might.”

“There can be no doubt of it,” said Emilia, and she sighed. “But I should doubt whether Colonel Lenox is aware to the full extent of the risk his wife is running, and which indeed terrifies me very much. Perhaps you are not aware that he has been out of town for the last ten days, and is not expected to return till next Tuesday — the evening before this splendid breakfast to which all the world is going. I do not believe — indeed I cannot believe that he is become so utterly heartless and

unprincipled as his conduct would seem to imply.”

“Perhaps not. I did not know that he had been so long out of town. I have judged him hastily, I see. Indeed, I cannot conceal from you the indignation with which I cannot help looking upon a great many things that I see going on in this great world. What a different world from what we were acquainted with in former days, Mrs. Danby! . . . I should be thought a sad, simple Cymon — a mere wild man of the woods, if people knew how much I am disgusted and affected by what I hear going on! I don’t know how it is, but I hear a good deal one way or other. . . . I believe people in general think me a soft, simple sort of fellow, only good to play the part of confidant. But I hope you are to be of this breakfast, Mrs. Danby—you would really enjoy it. It will remind you of old days—you can have no conception of the beauty of these gardens. Among other people, I happen to know the *millionaire* who owns them very well. It is really a most beautiful place. Shall you be there?”

“I do not know—I fear not.”

“You have an invitation, no doubt; or might I be allowed—might I be so very happy. . . . ?”

“I have a card; but I am not quite sure whether I shall not be under the necessity of refusing it.”

“They are going to give a splendid masquerade at the Argyle-rooms, on the same evening. Nothing at all like it, it is said, has been seen for many years. . . . Did you ever see the young cub, Mrs. Danby, to whose coming of age all this festivity is dedicated.”

“No, never. I have no personal acquaintance with the family?”

“The servility of the great world of fashion is one of those things that surprises me. . . . This man is excessively, incalculably rich, I am told; but then how has he made his money? By means very questionable and exceptionable, I understand—certain contracts. . . . Now, I chance to know something of his execution of these contracts. . . . however, his wife was an old friend of my mother’s, and she is very kind to me. But bless me, Mrs.

Danby, when I think of the way this man's money, I am afraid, was made, it does surprise me to see the influence he exercises—merely *through* his money, for he has no personal good qualities; and to see the crowds of people of fashion, as they are called, who frequent her assemblies; who, but a few short years ago, would not have admitted her across their threshold—merely because she possesses the most beautiful place within twenty miles of London. . . . And, as for that vulgar son!—if you were to see the beautiful, elegant creatures that are flattering him, and smiling in his face, and seeming actually ready to hunt him down!”

“My dear Mr. Wilcox,” said Emilia, with a smile, “even *I* shall begin to think you very *young* to wonder at this — and, still more, to think it peculiar to this age or to this town. As long as wealth can purchase luxury, and men continue selfish and luxurious, the man of wealth will find that he can buy consideration, as well as other good things. It is a pity a line cannot be drawn between ill-gotten wealth and wealth the

reward of honest industry and energetic enterprise, which has a just right to claim distinction—but I suppose that cannot be. . . .”

“But I hope you will be of the breakfast, Mrs. Danby.”

“I do not think that I shall. Pray, let us think no more of it.”

She did not certainly believe that she should; for, since her last mention of the subject, Mr. Danby had seemed more gloomy and uncomfortable than ever: and she—for she was not *quite* an angel—had felt too much hurt to venture to trust herself to speak upon the subject again. But a most unexpected auxiliary came into the field; one whose power when she chose to exert it was almost unlimited; though usually, like most possessors of this sort of unacknowledged power, she was very prudent in the exercise of it.

CHAPTER L.

La simplicité nous présente l'image de la vérité.

VAUVENARGUES.

Mr. Danby was sitting in his chambers, engaged, as he too often now was, rather with endeavouring to attend than really attending to the business before him, when a knock was heard at the door.

“Come in,” said Mr. Danby.

The door opened, and Susan appeared.

She came in, erect, vigorous and spirited as usual, dressed in her best bonnet and cloak; not in marketing trim, but spruce, and as if she had been upon a visit—her gaunt figure and strongly marked face set off to advantage by the dress which she wore.

“Are you at liberty, sir?” said she.

“ Yes, if you have anything to say to me,” said her master, pushing away the papers before him with an air of weariness.

Glad, indeed, to be relieved from the fatigue of forcing attention, and to have his mind diverted from painful thought by any means.

“ Sit down, Susan, and let us hear what you have to say.”

Thus invited, she took a chair, and settled herself comfortably upon it as if preparing for a sociable chat, and began—

“ I have just taken the liberty to call upon you, Mr. Matthew, about that little affair of my brother’s, which you were so good as for to say you would set to rights for him. It’s but a mite of a business for such a great lawyer as you are to concern himself about; but I’m sure we are all the more obliged to you.... But, bless my stars! how ill you do look!”

Mr. Danby, it is true, did look very ill: he was gradually losing flesh, and he was, in truth, become almost a skeleton. His nights were restless; his meals without appetite;

the disorder of his mind was gradually producing its slow but sure effect in paralyzing every function; and the vital frame was consuming away under the influence of that mysterious but now unfeeling flame which animates and finally destroys this tabernacle of clay.

This day he was more unhappy than usual because he had been quarrelling with himself. It had been his proud determination to conceal his sufferings—to yield the point without further contest—to abandon himself to the slow operations of his silent despair. Sometimes his thoughts even went so far as to the idea of releasing her. He felt he was a weight upon the life, an obstacle to the happiness of the being he adored so passionately, and he often wished to have done with it; and that his disappointments and his sufferings, unknown to all the world, should be hidden in that dark grave, which to him was as a last asylum.

He had resolved not to interfere with those plans or those engagements which made him so miserable. I believe I have said this before—and now he had suffered his temper

to get the better of him—his irritation to betray itself by the most harsh and unreasonable speeches. She was offended, and with cause.

He was angry with himself, displeased with her, miserable at the idea of the unread note, and of the invitation, which his jaundiced eye represented in every way that could render him the most uncomfortable.

In spite of all Emilia's endeavours to persuade him to eat, he had left his untasted breakfast on his plate and had retired to his chambers, leaving her in a state of uneasiness not to be described.

"My stars!" said Susan, "how ill you do look!"

"Do I?" said he. "Well, I believe I am not very well; but let us understand this business of your brother's. How was it? I think you said...."

"The business of my brother's, sir," said Susan, still looking anxiously at him and seeming to forget the purpose of her visit in some new interest—"that can wait a little for your leisure; for you do look so ill, that

I am sure you don't seem fit for no business at all."

"Never mind my looks, Susan. Go on with what you came about."

"Oh, Mr. Matthew, Mr. Matthew!" shaking her head, "I am but a poor servant, and perhaps it's not for me for to speak. And yet, when I see you so wan, and thin, and wretched-looking like, it's hard for me, who love you almost as well as the mother who bore you, to hold my peace, as perhaps in reverence and duty I ought for to do; but it is enough to make one mad to see you a flinging away your own and that good young creature's happiness, all in a sort of a mazy like; just as if people knocked their heads together in the dark."

"Her happiness!" said Mr. Danby. "I have never had anything to do with her happiness."

"That's all that 'fine book novel talk, that I'm ashamed for to hear a wise man, like you, master, a-using. — Her happiness! says he. And if you don't go for to make her happiness, pray tell us who is?"

Susan was privileged, and she felt that she was ; but she had long sought in vain for an opportunity of clearing up what she thought her young master's mistakes ; and she was resolved not to lose the one thus opened to her. So she went on.

“ I love mistress, you know, sir—odd if I didn't, when we have lived together one and forty years, come Michaelmas : we've had our fallings out and our fallings in ; but never heed that. I love missis, and I love you ; and save that brother of mine, in that big place yonder, over seas — I never can remember its proper name ; for I don't like to use its bad one of Botany Bay — save him—and I never saw him since I was ten years old—I love nothing on this side the grave but missis and you, Master Matthew....and sorry I am to say, I think missis has a many more faults, and makes a many more mistakes than I am glad for to see—and it's a hard thing, and perhaps against the commandment, to tell an only son so, but, in my opinion, you mind what missis says a great deal too much.”

Mr. Danby made no answer. He was

always a patient listener to Susan when she honoured him with a lecture, it being his secret opinion that there was more good sense to be winnowed out of the chaff of Susan's discourse, than out of that of the most part of her sex.

“ Missis, you see, Mr. Matthew, hasn't seen much of the world, like you and me have ; and she's apt to think too much of one thing—and that's a very right thing ; I'm not going for to say as it isn't—and that's *saving* ; and she's apt to care for nobody on the wide earth but one man, and that's natural enough, for it's you, Master Matthew — and maybe me—and she don't very well endure with things that are not just cooked up in our old musty, wry-fashioned ways ; and because this young lady is *quite* a young lady, and so elegant, and so delicate, and more grand like—though, I'm sure, a less grander or prouder doesn't live—than we are used to, missis took a dislike to her from the first. I saw it plain enough that first night, when I took the poor, wan, fainting thing, all in her deep mourning, out of that hack-chaise, and my very

heart yearned to that good young lady, when I saw her turn to that poor ninny of a father—because he *was* her father....Missis didn't like her. She took a prejudice, as I call it, against her. She couldn't bear her to be so fond of her father.—She hates that poor old thing like pison: but, Master Matthew, I thought to myself, so good a daughter will make our Matthew a good wife; and so she would, an it hadn't been your own fault.”

“My fault? Nay, Susan, what fault is it of mine? Could I help her not being happy? Could I help....”

“Missis put you wrong, Master Matthew, from the first. She's always a reproaching that poor young lady behind her back—ay, and to her face too, sometimes—because, forsooth, she's not in love with you. As if it was likely she should be in love with such things as any of us! That was true enough; but missis had no rights to reproach her for it; for how was she for to help it? But missis said she hated you; and that was a scandal and a falsity. Law bless us!—she's

no more hate in her heart than the new-born babe. She can't bring herself, I see, even for to hate missis, much less you.

“No, no, sir,” she said, pausing to take breath; but as Mr. Danby was silent, taking up her parable again—“she'd have soon liked you well enough, and loved you too, if you'd have let her.—I had an inkling of it, but I didn't understand it well till just now. I've got more experience, sir. I see how the fashions of this world goes, and I understand all about it as clear as the day-spring now.”

“And what do you understand about it, Susan? and where have you been lately, to add so much to your stock of worldly experience? Pray, let me have it all out, now you have begun,” said her master, whose attention and interest were excited in spite of himself.

“Why, sir, my brother's wife's niece, who do you think she should be? and where do you think she should be, but under-nurse to Mrs. Lenox — that beautiful angel, who is our Mrs. Matthews's bussom friend.”

“Well.”

“ And I’ve been to see her, sir, once or twice, by her own invitation, to drink tea in the nursery.—The girl’s a looking after my savings, I warrant; but they’re not for her. However, that’s neither here nor there; but she’s very civil, and so is head-nurse, who’s a very nice, respectable woman; and so I’ve been there once or twice to tea. And, my stars! but what a different way of going on there it is!”

“ Different from what?” he asked, his attention more and more arrested, till he fairly laid down his pen, rested his elbow on the table and his head upon his hand, and fixed his eyes upon Susan’s face. “ How different?”

“ Why, from our ways of going on. My stars! why it’s like being in heaven!—all so light, and so fair, and so beauteous to behold. I don’t think King Solomon himself had a fairer palace than that there.—They took me for to see the house. Why, the rooms be so big, you hardly know where to find yourself in them; and all hung with silks, and satins, and velvets, and such like, blue, and yellow, and scarlet, like a pomegranate—and grand

with picters and statues, in great burnished gold frames. — And then, lo and behold! there's another room at the end of it, just as big and just as grand; and when you go for to enter into it, what is it but a looking-glass from top to bottom of the room! — a wall of real looking-glass, like! And there all the fine things are figured over again! — and then, what they call them diamond glittering things, a hanging from the roof of the room, all sparkling like dewdrops in a rainbow — and the windows all open, looking on that vast and most sumptuous park, with its green trees, so fair and magnificent — and the blue sky shining like heaven over head, and the sun beaming so bright, and all the pother of beautiful carriages, and beautiful ladies a going by! — It's not to be believed, Mr. Matthew, how beautiful it all is: and from top to bottom of that house it's all and altogether just the same; every chamber is so fair and sumptuous — one is blue and silver, and one is green and gold, and one pink, like a moss-rose, and another is crimson, like a peony — and it's all as one, like a palace of

the queen of flowers—if such a queen there ever was ; but I believe *that's* only a tale.”

“ Well, Susan, and what has all this grand house to do with us ? ”

“ Why, sir, in my poor opinion, it's a great deal to do with us. Sir, when I saw all these fine and beauteous things, says I to the maid—‘ And does your missis always *live* here, or is this for company like, and show ? ’—‘ To be sure,’ said she, ‘ she lives here : all fine ladies live in this way.’ And then I began to say to myself, ‘ That's the way, I'll be bound then, my young missis lived afore she was married to our Matthew.’ ”

“ Not quite in such a splendid style as that, Susan, but something like it ; but I think she has too much sense to care for such trifles.”

“ Sir, they ben't altogether trifles. Habit's a second nature, as I've heard say. And now, what I'm coming to is this — and that's all I *am* coming to — when missis said she hated you, because she looked pale and wan, as she did, I never thought she *did* hate you, for I° was very sure she couldn't. Who could hate *you*, Master Matthew, who are both wise

and good, and very kind too, when you only think of it?—but that, by the by, is your fault—you don't always think of it—but who's to hate you?—who ever did?—much less, such a gentle lamb as this, as wouldn't hate a fly. But now only think—and why didn't we none of us ever think of it? I'm sure, I, for one, could cry my eyes out, to think of it now, I know.—Only think of taking that pretty young creature, so used to green trees, and blue skies, and flowers, and light, and pink, blue, and crimson, and a-shutting her up with two old men and two cross old women, in a little pokey hole like our street there, or this, which is fur and fur worse! I did put some jessamine and roses paper up *there*, and that was something....And then, forsooth, we must quarrel with her because she looks pale! I'll tell you what, master—did you ever see a geranium put up in the cellar to keep it from the frost in the winter, without air, or the blessed sun upon it, and see how it comes out in the spring, like?"

Mr. Danby sighed; but there was comfort

in the sigh. Susan's harangue filled him with a mixed sensation of pleasure and of pain.

"Go on," he said, with deepening interest in his manner.

"The worst comes last—what missis is an angered at, and what has angered you—I know it has—has been to see, lo and behold! she so wan and pale when with us, perks up and blooms out as beautiful as the morning when that Mrs. Lenox comes to town. Now, master, it's a wicked thing to envy her that—poor young creature—her friend and school-child like, as I hear she is, and she a-taking her out in her pretty little carriage, like Cinderella's mice and pumpkins for all the world; and giving the poor, whitened plant fresh air and pleasant exercise, and light, and company. Why, it's like a fool not to suppose she would look happier. And pray who's in fault, an she does?"

"Why it's your fault, and your mother's fault, and my fault, Master Matthew. We ought to ha' thought of all this before. We ought to ha' looked a little to see that she

had what was as victuals and drink to her. And it was because she didn't bring a fortin with her, perhaps—though I say, such a face and such a temper is worth all the gold of Ophir, for my part—that missis, and perhaps you, and perhaps I, sir—I'm no better than either of you—didn't think of providing her with costly things. She deserves to be wrapped in rose-leaves and miniver, that she does! and if that was *so*—and I'm greatly afeard so it *was*—why it was the dirtiest, nastiest, mean-spiritedest trick as ever was played in the world!”

Mr. Danby started, as one struck to the heart; he rose from his chair, he took two or three hasty turns up and down the room, he resumed his seat; but he only said—

“Go on, Susan—what would you have me do?”

“First and foremost, I'd not have you and missis spoil all the pleasure she *has*, poor thing, by looking as cross as crabs when she comes in again, and as if you begrudged her every pleasant hour she passed.”

It was a relief to Mr. Danby to find that one secret, at least, his mother had had the discretion to conceal from Susan.

“ But more than that, if I were husband to so sweet a creature—which it’s not I that ever shall—I’d show her, that though I was a musty old bookworm myself, I loved that she should be brave and gay, like other men’s wives; and so long as she did her duty by me, and her old father, and my mother, and all of us—and sure she does it like an angel by every one of us—and didn’t come a-whimpering, and a-begging, and a-crying, for this, and a-asking for that and t’other — I’d show her that I didn’t forget to make her happy in her own nat’ral way, as she made me happy in mine—and I’d have her go out, and be a little gay, in moderation like, and she’d never exceed I’ll lay my life on’t—and I’d open that pocket-book of mine—Master Matthew, *your* pocket-book is often too like your mother’s—the snaps too hard in opening — and I’d take out a ten-pound note—ay, twenty, may be, sometimes — and I’d say, ‘ You’re going this and there, and you’d like to be nice, and I’d have

you nice as the best, for who is better than you?" And I'd say, 'There, pretty one, go and let me see you've bought yourself the very prettiest dress in Lunnun town'—and see whether she'd look loving at you!—Not for your dirty note, Master Matthew, but for your thought, and for your love. Love comes of love; but what's the use of a love that never shows itself in making folk happy, in their own nat'ral way, like....?"

"Susan," said Mr. Danby, "I always thought you a very shrewd, sensible woman; but I did not give you credit before for such a just way of thinking. We have all been very wrong—as you say, most contemptibly mean, and most contemptibly selfish. It is too late to recover the ground we have lost," he added, with a sigh; "but not too late to contribute to her happiness. Did your mistress tell you of an invitation Mrs. Danby has received to some grand breakfast or another?"

"Yes, master, she did, in her grumbling way; and law! how unreasonable missis is in some things! She really was vexed with young Mrs. Danby, because as how she looked

as if she'd like to have gone. Now, I do say that's Turkish tyranny—that one mayn't even look as if one liked or didn't like—what one does or doesn't like !”

“ Then you think she would like to go ?”

“ Ay, master, that's what I'm sure she would.”

“ Then she certainly *shall* go.”

“ Ay, sure! that's spoke like yourself—because, though, Master Matthew, ‘honour your parents’ is the first commandment with promise; yet ‘leave father and mother, and cleave to your wife,’ is as big; for it's a Christian commandment—and when parents be unreasonable, as the best of 'em may be—a man ought for to stand by his wife, and not to see her trampled on, like—and I'm glad, and heartily glad, to hear you speak up like a man, and say, ‘Go she shall,’ let your mother say what she will.”

“ My mother will make no objection, I am sure, Susan.”

Susan looked desperately unbelieving; but she said no more on that head. She went on to say—

“ And then it’s only half done. She *must* have a new dress.—Law, sir! you should have seen Mrs. Lenox’s dress for this breakfast as is to be. Mrs. Henderson, the lady’s maid, let us all step down from the nursery to see it this very day when I was there—first, it’s of a muslin so fine, it’s like spider-web—real Ingia, sir, worked with flowers—oh, so beautiful! a-twisting all over it for a yard from the bottom; and such loads and loads of real Brussels lace!....”

“ Never mind Mrs. Lenox’s gown, Susan. What do I care for such nonsense?”

“ You married men ought to learn for to care. It’s not such nonsense, when it lets you pleasure a good wife—the best of women likes a new gown, take my word for it—and what would she be good for, pray, if she didn’t? You’d not have her love to go all slip-slop like yourself, I suppose?—Well, now, you should learn to think a little of these things; because as how you’re a husband, and you’re not to live all and altogether for number one now, master, as when you were a bachelor, and had nobody on earth to heed but two

old women, sharp enough to take care of themselves:—and as for Mrs. Lenox's pretty gown, I spoke of it for to mind you....She quarrels with her husband every day, and perhaps worse if all tales be true; and he never heeds her much, I fear, but she's as brave as May-day—while here's your sweet, good, faithful, obedient, dutiful wife may stand and whistle long enough for a bit of real Brussels lace, before any comes nigh."

"Susan," said Mr. Danby, with more cheerfulness than had been in his tone and manner for a long time, the new ideas thus forced into his mind were so pleasant, "as you complain that my fingers are not so ready as they should be at opening the snap of my pocket-book—take pocket-book and all, and open the snap yourself—and do what seemeth you good with the contents; but stay," said he, for obtuse as were his perceptions upon the articles of external decoration, it did suggest itself to his mind that Emilia's taste in dress and that of her advocate might not exactly suit; especially when he mentally contrasted Susan's bright, crimson ribbons, flaunting at

the top of her gaunt face, and the elegance and propriety of Emilia's appearance. "Don't you think it will be best to offer the contents to Emilia, and desire her to choose for herself?"

"Why, sir, may be it might—but it would be prettier done in my way. Now, sir, I once read a story—my stars! how fond I have been of stories in my young days. Many's a one I've read over and over again, in my chimney-corner."

"And that's what makes you so romantic, Susan."

"May be so. Well, this story was called the 'Marry Silfe,'¹ and was out of the French, I think I've heard say. It was a story of a lady who didn't like the husband she was forced for to marry, and of all the pretty tricks he played, to make her to love him. One was about a dress, just as this might be. She wanted for to go somewhere, and she thought her dress might do—and ttle 'Marry Silfe' got such a beautiful dress all made for her—and lo and behold! when she asks for her dress—out comes this that he'd a-got in secret—and

¹ Le Mari Sylphe of Marmontel, translated no doubt.

she was so pleased, you never saw the like!— And for this and such like, as the story said, she soon learned to love the ‘Marry Silfe’ better than all the world beside.—Now, sir, I see plain enough you’re thinking—if the Marry Silfe had had nobody better than such an old fogie as me for to choose his dresses, he’d better have let it alone—but I’m not going to be such a fool as to think of such a thing: but I’ll just go to Mrs. Lenox’s maid, Mrs. Henderson—she’s a nice discreet woman as ever you saw—and I’ll say, ‘Master wants for to surprise Missis with a beautiful new dress for this breakfast,’—and where’s the harm of letting her into such a pretty secret as that, I wonder?—and she’ll go with me to Maddam Devey’s, or Maddam Dushon’s, or Maddam this or t’other—and won’t we get something suitable, and pretty, and good!—not too fine—our dear missis will never love to be too fine—but something truly elegant for her, and proper for your wife to wear, Mr. Danby—for you’re a gentleman, and a rich man, and a clever man, and why, has not your wife a right to be nice?”

“Well, Susan, I must own I think you have profited more by reading romances than most ladies, as I have heard said, do—and I think your plan is a *very* pretty one. So pray let it be carried into immediate execution, and get the dress as fast as you can, for fear I should let out the secret: for my head is like a sieve you know, about secrets, Susan—it keeps the great ones; but it’s a hard matter not to let the little ones drop through.”

Where were all Mr. Danby’s suspicions and jealousies vanished to? They had cleared away like the morning mist, before Susan’s wholesome cheerful view of things.

The idea of giving pleasure—the scheme of the beautiful dress, flattered his affection and delighted his imagination; we know he had a corner of romance in his disposition. He and Susan alike had more of fancy than would ever have been supposed to hide itself under such uncouth outsides—but never mind the outside—wherever you detect a heart, be sure you will find a fancy in some odd corner or another of the character.

CHAPTER LI.

With other ministrations thou, O Nature!
Healest thy wandering and distempered child;
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters!
Till he relent;
And, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit healed and harmonized.

COLERIDGE.

How pleasant it was to Emilia when that very day, Mr. Danby returning home rather earlier than usual before dinner, went up to her room and knocked at the door, and was immediately admitted. She was alone as usual, and had just finished her little toilette to meet her husband at table.

He came up to her looking rather shy and awkward, and as if he did not exactly know how to begin; but he took her hand, looked up into her face, and said,—

“ Emilia, I am afraid you have had lately a very ill-natured husband.”

“ Oh, Mr. Danby! how could you ever think I should imagine you to be ill-natured?—but I have been very, very sorry to see you look so unhappy and ill.”

“ You never seem to think any one cross or ill-natured,” said he; “ your father, however, thought me very cross, and I think I was as surly as a bear.—Would you like to go to this breakfast, my dear?—It is very natural you should....Pray write immediately, if it is not too late, and accept the invitation; and I hope you will enjoy yourself very much.”

“ How kind you are!” she exclaimed, with a look of delighted surprise, that quite enchanted him. “ Yes, indeed, I should most particularly like to go to this breakfast; I have reasons why I very much desire it. Thank you, Mr. Danby.—But are you prepared to learn the grievous sacrifice this good nature will entail upon you that day?—You must really, for the first time in your life, dine *tête-à-tête* with my father, and manage to do without me—for we shall be setting out for

the breakfast about the same time that you are sitting down to dinner."

"Indeed!" said he. "What do they call it a breakfast for then? But have I never sat down to dinner without you before?"

"Never—so I hope you will bear the terrible loss like a philosopher."

She was quite in spirits; her desire to go to this breakfast had become very great, as she reflected upon her conversation with Mr. Wilcox—and yet, as I have said, after what had passed upon the subject, she felt an invincible repugnance to making the request to Mr. Danby. To see it proposed to her in this kind and pleasant manner, to see him look so good-humoured and so comfortable, quite animated her spirits.

As for poor Mr. Danby he was in the seventh heaven; her smiles, her looks of grateful pleasure, answered to Susan's agreeable prophecies; he felt that to confer happiness was not so totally out of his power as in his depression he had imagined; and no evil genius was there to prompt the depressing reflection, that this very breakfast, on which

her heart seemed set, was to carry her away from himself, and into the presence of another.

A few days passed over, and as they passed over, only added to the anxieties of Emilia on her friend's account. The carriage usually came to fetch her, it is true, but there was little satisfaction in the meeting which ensued.

Emilia was anxious and grave, Lisa flighty and absent in her manner: the warnings that had been received from Mr. Wilcox were mentioned to her friend, but were answered with petulance, or received with a kind of haughty pride. Nothing seemed to offend Lisa more than the slightest doubt of her prudence and honour, while nothing was less satisfactory than her way of proceeding.

The poor little boy continued ill; he had one of those lingering, infantile fevers which occasion so much restlessness and fretfulness, and was always wanting his mamma. His mamma, however, paid but hasty visits to her nursery; her mind seemed too restless and

too much absorbed by other things, to bear to be long together in one place.

Colonel Lenox had not yet returned home ; nor could Emilia learn that he was expected before the Tuesday evening mentioned by Mr. Wilcox. His wife seemed hurt and offended by his absence ; and by the circumstance that he had gone away without even telling her where he was bound, and had not written one single line to her since his departure.

The truth was, that he was miserable himself, and in such a state of mental irritation, that his home was become insupportable. He could not—perhaps I should rather say he never properly endeavoured to make up his mind to his situation. He could not console himself for his loss. Every fresh day increased his regret as he contrasted the wife he possessed with the being he had lost. He was a prey to every species of self-reproach :—he cursed his own infatuated delays ;—he grieved over the sufferings that he might with one honest word have terminated ; but most of all he detested himself for the infatuated precipitation with which he

had linked his fate to another—sacrificed the liberty he prized so highly to a short-lived passion; and imposed upon himself a burden of duties, equally irksome and repulsive to his nature.

He endured this situation for a short time; but his temper gave way under it; he became more irascible and irritable than ever; he felt as if he almost hated the beautiful and volatile creature whom he was bound to guide and to protect: he wanted patience for the task; every attempt he made to restrain her was made in so violent and irritating a manner, that he saw he was doing more harm than good.

At last, according to his usual plan, he fairly threw the yoke off his shoulders; and, panting for liberty—for that opportunity for thought and reflexion which was not to be found in the hurry of town—he one morning hastily ordered his valet to pack up a few things, and, flinging himself into the first mail-coach, was carried, he cared not whither, and found himself at last on the banks of Windermere.

The beauty of the scenery here attracted

his attention. It was on the loveliest of June mornings that, opening his eyes after a heavy sleep in the coach, he found himself upon the shores of those still and lovely waters.

The woods were sweet with the dew of morning; the spreading water glittering in the rays of the rising sun; the blue smoke of the cottages rising through the mist to the heavens—he stopped the coach, sprang out, and, catching his portmanteau from the guard, sat down upon it, soldier-like, under the shade of a broad, spreading oak, which, growing on a little hillock, commanded the sweet and peaceful scene.

Here he seemed to pause for the first time during the last agitating weeks. He had time for reflection—a breathing time, as it were—that time so invaluable if well applied; that time which the hurry of a life, of the world, so little affords the opportunity to enjoy.

The image of Emilia was the first which presented itself—that image which, since the interview in the nursery, waking or sleeping, had never been absent. Again he saw that pure, clear eye of truth and virtue—that

calm yet fervent expression—that cool and determined brow; again he heard those accents of loyalty and good faith to her husband, at once his admiration and his despair.

Not that he harboured a criminal thought—but he would have retained her heart when all was lost besides—he would have retained the heart; he could not endure the idea of yielding *that* to another. He had formed to himself a sort of vague plan of platonic tenderness and sympathy, which was like anything but that simple and righteous friendship which Emilia had supposed could in future subsist between them. He had been deeply offended at what he thought this second proof of her heartlessness and inconstancy, and had resented it with all the warmth and injustice of his character.

But now, as he sat meditating in the quiet calmness of this lovely morning, better and more peaceful thoughts rose to his mind. He reflected with admiration upon that which he had before resented so deeply—her fidelity, her truth, her purity and dignity of heart, began to assume their true

colours before his eyes—and his feelings to take a severer and a better turn.—The infection of vice is great, but the infection of virtue is greater still. The influences of her just and generous sentiments began gradually to purify the selfishness of his own: he was beginning to feel it possible to desire her happiness, though he himself was not to form it.

Then he thought of his wife; of the love she once had borne him; of his passionate devotion of the moment, and of his as sudden alienation and indifference. Why could he not love her as he once had done?

And then — unhappy Lisa! — rose up to memory such scenes of capricious exactions, of heat and violence, of contemptuous sarcasm, and insolent neglect of all warning and all advice—the results, it is true, of a hidden and disappointed love, which could not and would not be satisfied with less than it itself bestowed—yet the contemplation was, alas! little favourable to the renewal of that affection which it would have been the happiness of your life to obtain.

Absence softens the harsh outlines of things—absence heightens esteem; adds fresh vivacity to affection; calls up the sweet and gentle passages of the past; and fills the soul with a thousand tender remorse for the hasty injustice—the distorted representation—the rash condemnation which the impatience of the moment has excited in ourselves.

But how if absence presents none of these things? How if the memory does *not* reflect the sweet and gentle remonstrance—the silent tear—the kind and generous desire for reconciliation—the ready candour which owns the hasty fault? How if it presents but unrestrained and bitter retorts, contemptuous sarcasms, violent looks, and passionate tears? And ah, unhappy and mistaken Lisa! how few but passages such as these had you inscribed upon your husband's heart!

The reflections of Colonel Lenox do not seem likely to improve either his wife's happiness or his own.

Thus he had wiled away the time from day to day, traversing these beautiful scenes on foot—thinking every evening that the next

morning he ought to return home; and every morning yielding to the temptation which kept him where he was.

As for Lisa's actual safety, in justice to him it must be said that he had not the slightest apprehension upon the subject. He knew very well that he possessed her heart; and in this lay his greatest and most inexcusable fault—that, knowing it—even feeling in secret somewhat vain of the hold that he still maintained upon her affections—he had not the candour and the justice to attribute her violence and unreasonableness to their true cause. He did not soften these faults to himself, by recollecting that which will soften even the most disagreeable effects of attachment. He did not choose to reflect that they arose from love—ill-regulated, it was true—but still most genuine love, after all.

He knew she was in the constant habit of daily association with Emilia: he believed, under her influence, that nothing could go wrong. He forgot the many hours in which, alone and unguarded, Mrs. Lenox was mingling with the world; and most of all he forgot the

effect which his capricious and unaccountable absence was certain to produce upon every one.

In Lisa it excited the most deep and passionate resentment. It was the first time since their marriage, in spite of all their disagreements, that such a thing had occurred.

Not one line, not one syllable, to tell her where he was, or why he had left her! The late quarrel might have furnished an occasion for this proceeding; but then they had quarrelled so often, and nothing of the sort had ever occurred before.

Lisa was growing every day more and more dissatisfied with herself, and consequently more and more suspicious of the conduct of others.—She began to fancy everything most offensive to a wife in the reasons for this unaccountable absence.

She took her revenge accordingly.

She thought herself justified in accepting from another expressions of tenderness such as she believed were, in some way or other, being offered at a strange shrine by her husband.

It is not my intention to follow the progress of her misguided heart, from vanity to coquetry—from suspicion to jealousy—from disappointment to alienation—enough the advance the deceiver was making in her affections was increasing day by day, though in a manner almost imperceptible to herself.

Rash and imprudent, she trusted to her own pride for protection; and, armed with so treacherous a defence, despised the dangers which surrounded her, and the daily and hourly remonstrances of her friend.

CHAPTER LII.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.

LONGFELLOW.

Tuesday has arrived.

To-morrow is Wednesday — to-morrow is the eventful day which shall decide upon the destiny of them all.

The eve of that day is already dawning.

The morning breaks—the sun rises in his strength, and goes careering through the sky, shedding his beams upon all those different scenes of eventful life which are acting in this great tragi-comedy of human existence.

The first group he visits with his slant and early beam is that of a set of young men, who are coming out of a club-house in St. James's Street, and separating to seek their

late and untimely repose in their different cabs.

They are young gentlemen either of fortune or fashion, who are accustomed to spend at the gaming-table many of the hours of the night, and to make compensation to sleep from the hours of the sweet and wholesome day.

Some of them have been playing very deeply—some of them have lost more than they can pay—and others have won more than they can keep. They all understand that very well, and are as reckless about their gains and losses as they are about everything else. Others have been standers-by, as mere spectators, at the gaming-table, and something much of the same sort at the luxurious supper which has succeeded.

One is there—his cheek ruddy with health, and his eye bright with simple meaning. He has been an attentive observer of what has been passing among the gay revellers this evening, because it has interested him more than usual. That other young man who is now getting into his carriage is obliged to

be in a slight degree steadied by his footman's hand as he mounts the steps. He is not in general thus overtaken by wine, but leaves the gayest parties as entirely himself as he entered them; but this night he has suffered himself to be heated, and to be surprised into taking a larger quantity of wine than even *his* head can bear. And the consequence has been a wager.

The young gentleman had in fact rather lost his temper—he had allowed himself to be surprised into saying things which he never intended to say;—for once the languid and indifferent Alcibiades had become heated and in earnest; and he had laid a wager of fifty to one that he “*shall* persuade her to brave her husband, and, in defiance of his authority, go to this masquerade.”

“Will any body back him?”

“Not I! not I!—We all know Lenox too well for that.—He's a mighty cool hand.—He lets that prettysilly thing he calls his wife trifle and amuse herself as she pleases, but she'll find him rather a rough customer if she trespasses too far....For my part, I don't see the

great triumph of persuading her to go there, even if you *could*, when all the world are going too—only that I heard he has sworn his great oath, that no wife of his shall ever wear a mask; and he's one who, when he has got a whim of this sort into his head, usually holds to it.....”

The young nobleman who had laid the wager said no more. And this was almost all that passed.

Now Johnny Wilcox was, as you will have begun by this time to perceive, a very shrewd, observing, intelligent young fellow: and he thought he understood all this scene very well. And when he got into his cab he sat musing upon it in his own mind; and as he laid his head upon his pillow, he became more and more uneasy.—The result was, that he did not sleep very long, if at all; and that, therefore, the sun, by the time he had reached two degrees short of meridian, glanced upon the bright harness of a perfectly appointed cab which was making its way through the dust and obstructions of dark and narrow Chancery Lane.

And now he is ushered into the little sitting-room—where he is for a short time alone—and amuses himself with looking at the backs of the half-dozen books, and twisting the little china shepherdess about upon the chimney-piece—then the door opens, and the sweet Emilia enters, looking so bright, so pleased, and so happy !

It is the Emilia' of the Oaks again !

She smiles with her usual cordiality—stretches out her hand—and then they are seated ; and after a few preparatory sentences, she looks into his face, and says anxiously, “ Something, I am sure, is amiss with you, Mr. Wilcox, this morning.—Are you come to let me know it ? ”

“ I wish it were my privilege to be allowed to come to you whenever anything goes amiss with me,” said he, “ and it would not be amiss long — but this is a matter that vexes and teazes me, and which I think you ought to know. And yet, whether there is anything amiss, I declare I can hardly say ; but does your beautiful friend, Mrs. Lenox, intend to go to the masquerade to-morrow or not ? ”

“ I believe she intends to go — Why do you ask? This is a sort of amusement which I know many people think excessively dull; and so I believe it usually proves; but why should not she go? Colonel Lenox has written to his valet to say that he shall certainly be at home at night, and of course he will go with her.”

“ I heard last night at C—s, that Colonel Lenox had declared she should *not* go; and I heard a wager laid that, in defiance of her husband’s known opinions upon that subject, she should be induced to go for the sake of another. You know who that other is, I suppose.”

He then entered fully into the subject of his fears and suspicions; concluding with entreating Mrs. Danby, as she valued her friend’s reputation and security, to persuade her to abandon the idea.

Her going would be attributed by all the world to influences which had become so notorious, that she ought to take the very first opportunity of openly disavowing them.—

Her husband's honour and her own were alike in jeopardy."

"I see the full force of what you say," said Emilia, growing red and pale between impatience and anxiety. "She has promised to send the carriage to fetch me this morning. I will not rest till by my entreaties and my representations I have persuaded her. I know she has thought with pleasure of the scheme, but Lisa will always hear reason, if one has but a little patience with her."

At this moment the maid entered with one of the tiny notes.

"Dearest Emily,

"Don't be very angry, and don't be very disappointed. I meant to have had a regular old dowager drive out with you Edgware Road way to-day; but here is Mrs. Castle-rising has just written to me. She has got such delicious schemes for to-morrow evening, and there is not a moment of time to be lost, so I am going out with her shopping over half the town, and shall not be at home till midnight, as I dine with her *en petit comité*. I won't tell you what we are about till we

meet to-morrow. If you like to have the carriage to go into the Park, pray tell my man.

“ Yours ever.

“ Little Tim is better to-day, nurse says.”

Emilia was terribly disconcerted at this sudden change of plans.

“ How unfortunate!” she cried, to Mr. Wilcox; and she gave him the note to read; “ but I will write.”

She wrote—

“ Dearest Lisa,

“ I am very much disappointed not to be able to speak to you this morning. Can I not see you anywhere in the course of the day, just to speak only three words to you? I think my words would have more efficacy than anything I could write. I beseech you, abandon the idea of this masquerade, unless Colonel Lenox arrives to-night, and gives his sanction to it.”

The answer did not arrive till nearly five o'clock in the evening.

“ Really, Emilia, you grow perfectly ridi-

culous ; I *never* am angry with *you*, but I could find in my heart to be so now. Why, every body in the world will be at this masquerade. I would not miss it for the universe. Upon my word, you are becoming as fantastical as an old maid.”

The third group which the sun visited with his beams this day was a happier one.

Mrs. Danby was about to go up into her room to give some fresh directions about her own little preparations for this eventful breakfast, when she met Susan upon the stairs, with “ Oh ! pray, madam, don't go up just yet. Stay down just five minutes, Mrs. Danby.”

“ Why, Susan—why may I not go into my own room, pray ?”

“ Oh ! young Mrs. Danby, wait only three minutes, and I will come and tell you when we're ready !”

Susan's face was full of joyous and busy importance. But Emilia, thinking of other things, little heeded it. She went down with her usual good nature into the sitting-room again.

She sat there a short time engaged in her various employments, till at length the little maid opened the door with—"Now, ma'am, if you please."

Emilia went up stairs. It is needless to say that Susan was in waiting for her. The curtains of the bed were fast closed; and Susan, her cheeks quite crimson with excitement, was standing at the foot of it.

"Now, come in, young Mrs. Danby!" she cried; "and do tell me what you are going for to wear to-morrow at this breakfast!"

"Why, to tell you the plain truth, Susan, I have been a little puzzled with that business; but I have contrived what I think will do very well. If you ask Mary, she shall show it to you."

The answer to this was a sudden tearing open of the curtains of the bed by Susan, and a display of the beautiful costume she had prepared with all its *real* Brussels lace, its ribbons, and its elegant ornaments; a bonnet still more beautiful than the one procured before—gloves, parasol—all the details of the

most finished toilette, arranged in proper order around.

Emilia was speechless with astonishment—Susan with delight.

However, after a moment, her tongue was loosened again, and she began with her usual volubility.

“Well, *do* you think it pretty, or do you not? It’s all real lace, and real Ingia muslin, and has cost Mr. Danby I won’t tell you how much money.....but wasn’t it a kind and pretty thought in him?—and won’t you look nice!”

“Mr. Danby!” faltered Emilia.

“Yes, to be sure. Now you’re agoing to go out, he’s ordered all these pretty things to be got for you; because he says how you are the handsomest and the best of them all.....and now only just try them on, that I may see that they fit; for the young woman as brought them here is a-waiting, and ther’ll may be a stitch be wanting here or there; so, bless you, just try it all on.”

“But did Mr. Danby? Was he so good

as to order all these pretty things for me, Susan? How could it come into his head to think of such things?"

"Oh!" said Susan, "true love has put many an odd matter into a man's head, afore now. But, bless you, make haste and put all this panjandery on; for I am quite in a fidget to see how well you will look in it."

Susan's wish was soon gratified, and beautiful she did indeed look in it.

"*Now*, you look like a bride at last," cried Susan, clasping her hands with triumphant delight, as she walked round and round her. "Ay, ay! now it's all right. I never foreboded good since you came into this house—poor, weany creature as you war!—all in that melancholy black, like! But now you're a bride at last, and this is your real wedding-day, and master and you are going for to be happy, ain't you?" she added, as she looked with rapture upon Emilia's quiet smile and rising colour.

"It fits beautifully, don't it?"

It was a trifle—a mere trifle, it would

seem; but, as Emilia felt herself restored to the elegance of former days, and glancing into her glass, beheld reflected the renewed image of the lost Emilia Wyndham, a very soft sigh of regret and of happiness mingled raised the beautiful lace that hung over her bosom.

She was grateful — she was pleased — and yet....

But she shook off that feeling in a moment, and said cheerfully—

“Now we must take off this exquisitely pretty dress, Susan, and I must put on my other; for I am impatient to go down to tell my father, and to thank Mr. Danby. I thought I heard him come in.”

“Ay, sure enough, he’s come in; and now *do*, dear — just step down as you are, and show it to your father, and to master—he’ll be so pleased!”

She coloured again a little, and then yielded to persuasion, and stepping lightly down stairs, ushered by the proud and happy Susan, opened the drawing-room door. There was one more than was exactly wanted sitting

within;—the mother was there as well as the son; but she was placed behind the door, and as it opened, Emilia did not perceive her; while stepping forward, half ashamed of the display, she went up to her husband and said, “Susan insists upon my coming down in the dress itself, to thank you for your very kind thought and pretty surprise, Mr. Danby.....”

He looked at her—gazed at her—held her back a little with one hand—covered his eyes—gazed again—said nothing, but sighed.

She looked even dazzlingly beautiful; her colour raised, her eyes beaming with grateful kindness, and adorned by this charming dress, which set off her fine figure and face to the highest advantage.

But he.....

In her usual every-day dress, withered and faded with the life she habitually led, he had learned to feel as if the vast difference which separated them had lost much of its extent. Now—as he looked at the bright and radiant being, almost flashing like some heaven-descended angel before his eyes —

the bitter sense of his own immeasurable deficiencies in comparison again preyed upon his heart.

She saw the sudden expression of pain which crossed his brow ; and taking his hand, looked upon him with the gentlest affection. She was beginning to divine, and to take interest in this deep, and wayward, and unhappy passion.

“Are you not pleased, after all, with the effect produced by your charming present?” said she. “If you do not like it, perhaps I shall find it possible to discover a fault in it. . . .but indeed I cannot do that easily.”

“No ; it’s a beautiful, beautiful gown, my dear,” cried Mr. Wyndham, who had been surveying her with unmixed delight ; “and at last you look like Emilia Wyndham again.”

She saw her husband’s wounded look.

“No, dear papa, you must not say so. Say I look like Emilia Danby — the grateful wife of a kind and most indulgent man.”

“Can you say that from your heart, Emilia?” said her husband, doubtingly.

Her only answer was a smile — but such a

smile! He had never seen such a smile upon her face before.

She soon left the room, attended by Susan, without even perceiving Mrs. Danby, who mute with dismay and astonishment, sat fixed as a statue behind the door.

“Now,” said Mr. Wyndham, “that is a beautiful dress. I have not seen Emilia look like herself for years.....”

So he went mumbling on, but no one listened to him.

Mr. Danby's heart was full.

He sat back in his chair, musing, in no unpleasing mood, upon the result of Susan's prophecies; upon the grateful and affectionate nature that responded so readily to the first touch of kindness; upon his own harsh and careless temper, which had so negligently thrown away the means of making one so good and innocent—if not altogether happy, so far, and far happier than she had been. He was musing upon other plans for her enjoyment which began to dawn upon his mind. He was savouring all the felicity of being released from the ceaseless meditation

upon self, to think with disinterested pleasure upon the happiness of another.

Mr. Wyndham, curious as a child, soon followed his daughter to take a fresh survey of the pretty trifles which had pleased him so much. His taste for pretty trifles, which had long languished for want of nourishment, seemed to revive upon this the first occasion for indulging it. No sooner was he gone than Mrs. Danby gave one of her loud "Humphs!"

Mr. Danby started from his pleasant reverie, and looking round, said—

"You there, mother! I protest I had forgotten you."

"I dare say you had, or you would never have let that dancing Dalilah parade her finery before your mother. You'd have been ashamed to have done it."

"And pray, mother," said her son, with a smile, "what is there to be so much ashamed of?"

"What is there to be ashamed of?—why, everything to be ashamed of! What are you about?—suffering your wife to wheedle you

first out of one thing and then out of another —I thought you'd been more of a man, Matthew!"

"I don't think it's the least unlike a man to be wheedled, as you call it, by a very charming woman; but I assure you there was no wheedling, or pretty faces in the business .. unless, indeed, poor Susan's face enters into that category, for she is the only wheedler in this case, I assure you."

Mrs. Danby's tongue was now set loose, and she railed unsparingly, first at Susan, than at Emilia, then at her son. Every one was included in the most bitter and unjust animadversions.

The torrent would have flowed, it is impossible to say how long, had not Mr. Danby, seeming all at once to take his resolution, risen from his chair, approached her, and said—

"My good mother, I have listened to you a very long time, and now I think it is your turn to listen to me.—We have had enough, and, in my opinion, a great deal too much of this kind of conversation; and, once for

all, let it end. — The course I propose in future to pursue with regard to my wife is one extremely different in every respect from that which we have so foolishly, selfishly, and ungenerously, followed until now. — That young lady, when she came among us....”

“ Hoot, toot !” cried the mother, losing all patience—she could not bear to hear Emilia called “ that young lady.”

“ She *is* a young lady,” reiterated Mr. Danby, “ and we ought to have treated her as one, mother,” he added, raising his voice with considerable determination, as, beating her foot in an angry tattoo on the floor, she seemed resolved not to hear him, and turned her head obstinately away.

“ Mother ! listen to me. We have been friends, and the best of friends, from the hour I first had knowledge to this day.—I love you, mother, and I honour you....”

“ Pretty honour !—love !—nonsense !”

“ I have let such feelings lead me, perhaps, too far — henceforward, mother,” he continued, speaking louder, “ if we are to con-

tinue friends, you must endeavour to love, and, at all events, you *shall* respect my wife—for she has been and she is like an angel from Heaven among us, and she deserves it.”

And saying this he returned to his arm-chair, crossed his legs, leaned upon his hand, and relapsed into silence.

No more words were needed—had he spoken for hours he could not have made himself better understood. She felt that her rule of wrong, of hatred, and injustice was at an end; that in future, the love and respect of the husband would shelter the wife from every malign influence. Mr. Danby had entered into the full force of Susan’s representations. He had pondered upon them much and long during the last few days, and the result of his ruminations had been the resolution to adopt a new course, and by what may be esteemed a thing incredible in real life, *he actually followed up his resolutions.*

Emilia soon came into the room again, looking pleased and happy, and, sitting down by her husband, endeavoured to amuse him with her conversation; while Mrs. Danby,

subdued and silenced, but gloomy and sulky as possible, sat chewing the cud of her discontent in a corner, and scowling on the scene.

CHAPTER XLIII.

There is a festival, where knights and dames,
And aught that wealth or lofty lineage claims,
Appear.

BYRON.

It was not until after the cloth had been removed, and Mr. Danby had retired to his chambers, that Emilia received the second note from Mrs. Lenox; and while she was pondering, with a distressed countenance, upon its contents, another from Mr. Wilcox, written in a hasty, scrawling manner, was put into her hand.

“For Heaven’s sake! dear Mrs. Danby, do not let Mrs. Lenox go to this masquerade to-morrow. Speak to her husband—try any means. I have not time to explain myself; but half a word is enough for you. She positively *must not go.*”

“Inquire,” said Emilia to the servant-maid, showing Mrs. Lenox’s note, “inquire from the footman who brought this note, whether his master is expected in town to-night.”

“The footman says, as how Colonel Lenox’s valet had a letter from his master to say that he should be in town at eight o’clock this evening,” was the answer.

“Then order me a carriage at Spillman’s, and tell the man to be here at a quarter to eight. I must go out this evening. Tell Mr. Biggs to come to me.”

“Biggs,” as he entered the room, “I must go out this evening for half an hour, and you must go with me. My dear father, will you take care of yourself till I come back?”

The expression of old Mrs. Danby’s face was worth observing, while these hurried directions were being given.

There she sat, silent, and still, and immovable as a statue; but drinking in every word.

Emilia, in the innocence of her heart, far from imagining that she was giving grounds for suspicion, did not even conceive the possibility of any suspicion existing—she did not

send in to tell Mr. Danby that she was obliged to go out; for, though perhaps it was the first time since her marriage that ever she had left home alone in the evening, she considered herself perfectly at liberty in this, as in every similar respect.

So at eight the carriage came to the door, and, accompanied by Biggs, she drove to Colonel Lenox's house in Grosvenor Street.

But Colonel Lenox had not returned home....

She inquired for Mrs. Lenox.—Mrs. Lenox was gone out to dinner....

She would step up into the nursery, she said, and see how the children were going on.

“Is your master expected to-night?” she asked of the servant as she entered the house.

Colonel Lenox had written to his valet that he should certainly be at home either this evening or the next morning, but had left it uncertain which.

She resolved to wait till a quarter to nine o'clock, and then return in time for Mr. Danby's tea.

She went up into the nursery—the children were both asleep—the little boy somewhat better. Emilia visited their tiny cots, while Nurse held the candle.

“He is better,” said Nurse, while Emilia looked anxiously at the little flushed cheek and thin feverish hand which was extended upon the fringed and embroidered counterpane. “He is better; but he frets after his mamma and papa so: the sense of that little creature, madam, is wonderful—I never saw such a child—he does not seem to forget as other children do. This very night, I thought he was busy with his playthings on the floor; and all at once he gets up and runs to stand by my knee, and begins to moan and fret, and when I kissed and soothed him, and asked him what it was for—‘I want papa and mamma,’ says he. The dear little, loving creature!”

Emilia sighed, turned away, and looked at the baby. The lovely, waxen cherub was asleep in all the innocent tranquillity of its age—too young to feel the heavy injury of neglecting parents. Perhaps this very inno-

cence affected the observer, more than even the moanings and lamentations of the elder child.

She bent her head and kissed the little slumberer; and then, hearing the clock go the second quarter, went down to Lisa's boudoir to look for pen and ink, in order to write a note to Colonel Lenox.

Nothing could exceed the disorder in which Mrs. Lenox's books and papers lay upon the beautiful inlaid-table — unanswered notes — unsettled bills — English novels with uncut leaves, and little French volumes half open — all tossed and thrown together as if for days the inhabitant of that adorned and beautiful abode had suffered everything to accumulate without heed. The disorder of her mind was pictured in the confusion around her.

With some difficulty Emilia found a sheet of note-paper, and as she opened the fair enamelled paper-book, her eye was caught by two drawings; they were prints of costumes, one for Ariel, the other for Belinda, in the Rape of the Lock. At the foot of the Belinda was written — “Choose which you like; but I

am for Belinda for you. To be sure you would make a sweet Ariel; but if you do not take Belinda, who can? I have made up my mind to be Thalestris, and nothing shall persuade *me* into Belinda—so no ceremony, I pray.

“ L. C.

“ A certain *élégant* has taken—what do you think?—Sir Plume !”

Emilia had read these few words, written in pencil upon the lower margin of the drawing, before she well knew what she was doing.

She shut the book.

It was then but too true Lisa had resolved upon going to this masquerade, and in character; and who was this *élégant* who was to personify Sir Plume? It was but too much to be feared, that she knew.

And in what company! That of Mrs. Castlerising—a person but too notorious in the world of fashion—the last person, as Emilia believed, that Colonel Lenox would wish his wife to be seen with.

It became more and more necessary to put Colonel Lenox upon his guard ; yet to allude to the subject in a note — subject to all those casualties to which notes passing through the hands of gentlemen's servants are liable, seemed impossible, except it were done in the very most equivocal terms.

She sat down and wrote—

“ Grosvenor Street, half-past eight.

“ I came here in hopes to have seen you for a few seconds upon your arrival ; but I can stay no longer, and must go home. It is most urgent for the sake of your future happiness, and that of one who should be dearer to you than yourself, that I should see you as soon as possible. Can you come to me to-morrow morning ? I go with Lisa to this breakfast, but shall not leave home till four.

“ E. D.”

She rang the bell, delivered the note, with orders that it should be given to Colonel Lenox the moment he arrived, and then returned to her carriage and went home.

She found no one in Chancery Lane but her father. Old Mrs. Danby had gone away directly after dinner. Mr. Danby was not yet returned. He did not, in fact, return to tea. Some engagement kept him at his chambers till so late, that all his family, as was sometimes the case, had retired to rest, and he let himself in.

The next morning he was up and away while Emilia was still sleeping; and, at breakfast, the presence of her father prevented her doing that which she had intended to do—give him some idea of the situation of things.

Perhaps she was not sorry that no opportunity occurred. She knew his severe and sarcastic turn of thought, and most particularly revolted from the idea of exposing the faults of her friend before a censor so little indulgent; yet she felt that, engaged and involved as she found herself, it would be right to let her husband into the confidence. However, things happening as they did, she had not that morning any opportunity. She comforted herself with thinking, that before night the danger would be over,

and Colonel Lenox and his wife have come to that understanding which would preclude the necessity of any further interference on her part: and thus, perhaps, do away with all the necessity for her of entering upon the subject with Mr. Danby.

And yet she could not help being uneasy. She felt that there was a disguise—and disguise she detested. She had written to Colonel Lenox—a matter in other circumstances perfectly indifferent, but which, in her peculiar situation, she thought should, at least, have been mentioned to her husband; but then to mention it, without entering upon a full explanation of all that had passed, seemed to be worse than not to mention it at all.

CHAPTER LIV.

Oft could he sneer at others, as beguiled
By passions worthy of a fool or child;
Yet 'gainst that passion vainly still he strove,
And even in him it asks the name of love!

BYRON.

Mr. Danby, who since the happy intervention of Susan had recovered his confidence and his cheerfulness as by a charm, pushed away his papers, and conversed at breakfast with an ease and a gaiety which made him positively agreeable. He was full, also, of little attentions to poor Mr. Wyndham, whom without any intentional unkindness, he had been too much in the habit of neglecting. The poor man was pleased and happy, and Emilia smiled her satisfaction.

She again alluded to her dress, and was full of its praises.

“ I did not think dear Susan had possessed

so much taste. One must not judge of people's taste by the way they trim themselves out, I see; for the dear woman seems to have odd notions upon such subjects, as far as she herself is concerned....but what she has chosen for you, Mr. Danby, I really must tell you—as I know you will be *particularly* interested by such subjects—is elegance and good taste itself.”

“ I am *particularly* interested upon this subject, my dear Emilia, because I wish you to be particularly pleased yourself. I am happy Susan has hit the matter so well. I had my forebodings upon the subject, certainly; but, I own, I thought the effect, when you came down yesterday, excessively pretty altogether.—And what time are you to set out-day?—for I could find in my heart to be such an old fool as just to step in and look at you again.”

“ Oh, pray do! I was only half complete yesterday. Do come in and see me in all my glory, decked out to perfection in your present.—Do come in before I go, Mr. Danby: I shall be the happier for having displayed

myself to you before I go among a set of people, whom, really, I don't care the least to please."

"Does that sentence *really mean* all it appears to imply, Emilia?" said he, looking at her with one of his sharp-questioning expressions of the eye.

"If it implies that your approbation is in all things most valuable to me, that sentence *does mean* all it implies," she answered, with an air of simple sincerity which made his heart glow.

Oh, blessed, blessed Susan!

The morning passed away—hour followed hour—still no sign from Colonel Lenox.

Two little notes she had received, but neither of them were from him.

The first was from Lisa.

"I came home so late last night!—a miserable preparation for this breakfast. I shall not go early, and I dare say your serene highness will be in no irrational hurry. I will send the carriage for you at four, and we

will go down *tête-à-tête*. There will be men enough to be had when we get there. The man who, above all men, ought to be there, is—; but it's no matter. I begin to imitate your philosophy at last, Emilia, and am as hard and insensible as the nether millstone."

The second was from Mr. Wilcox.

"I cannot get to see you this morning: I have business with my lawyer that will not be delayed. I was in a party last night, where I heard things said which only make me the more and more anxious upon the subject I spoke to you of. I shall take care to be at the entrance into the Gardens, and shall wait there till I see you come in. I will join you immediately. In the mean time, *do not suffer* her to go to this odious masquerade."

Three o'clock—and who now so proud and happy as both Susan and Mary; presiding at their sweet mistress's toilette? while Emilia,

anxious and troubled as she is, cannot help feeling her heart beat with a sort of foolish pleasure, as, thus restored to herself, she is about, once more, to enter the world, to which she has so long been a stranger.

She cannot—no, she is neither wise enough, nor indifferent enough, nor worried enough—she cannot help looking with pleasure upon the charming being that her glass reflects.

At last, the finishing stroke is put to Susan's handiwork; she strokes down the skirt; she arranges the last pin; she throws the beautiful lilac cloak over the snowy white of the dress; she places the light bonnet over the long, flowing curls, and pronounces her young mistress "done."

Mr. Danby has not yet arrived; but Mrs. Danby, curious as the rest of her sex, in spite of her ill-humour and dissatisfaction at the whole business, cannot deny herself the pleasure of really seeing "How she will look, pranked out in all this new finery." So she is sitting in the little dining-room, when Emilia enters, beauteous as the Rose of Sharon; and,

after saluting her, goes up to and kisses her father.

Biggs enters with a note.

It is hastily opened, perused with a look of vexation and annoyance, a shake of the head, and a half angry, half impatient little stamp with her foot upon the floor; then it is torn in four pieces and flung within the fender. Again she hastily stoops down, ungloves her hand, collects the pieces, opens a table-drawer, thrusts them in, locks it and takes out the key, and turning to Biggs with "No answer," continues her attentions to her father.

The old lady's mouth was now pursed up into the smallest possible dimensions; while her sharp black eyes were observing everything that passed.

Mr. Danby at length came in. He had left his chambers at this unusual hour. He called himself, and he felt himself to be an old fool for it; yet he could not deny himself the delight of seeing his charming treasure a second time dressed out and adorned with his gifts.

He hoped for one more glance of those happy and affectionate eyes, which were to him more glorious bright than the day-spring. His heaven was there — he could imagine no greater. To see her happy, and through him — to feel that he was not altogether indifferent to this beloved and beauteous creature — to creep in, gaze at her, and not feel hated, was as the joy of heaven to him.

He stole in so gently that she did not hear him enter the room, for she was stooping down and talking to her father. Mr. Wyndham was praising and admiring her dress with renewed pleasure, and in his childish way examining and remarking upon every part of it— so proud and so happy to recover the daughter of earlier and better days, that he was almost crying for joy.

She was busy lending herself to his feebleness and his enjoyment, and felt additionally pleased and additionally grateful to see him so content.

Mr. Danby stole to her side with—

“ Now it is my turn to admire you, Emilia.”

She turned round, a little startled, and

gave him such a sudden, bright, and speaking look.

One look alone before had ever expressed so much: and ah, how different had the expression been from this!

“Well, my love,” he said—it was the first time in the course of their long connection that he had ever once ventured to use that word—“you *are* really beautiful.”

She laughed at the compliment.

“You must not be so proud of your own handiwork indeed, Mr. Danby.”

“And what do you call this? and what is this stuff?” He went on examining the various parts of her dress with the curious eye of a scientific philosopher engaged in the examination of some rare and beautiful production of nature.

“Oh, this is called silk, and this is called lace — real Brussels! as that extravagant Susan proudly called it—and this is from the looms of India....one must use great words upon so great an occasion.”

And so she prattled to him; for her heart

was full of his kindness; and kindness was never lost upon the cheerful spirit of Emilia.

And now the clock struck four, and a carriage was heard coming up the street.

“Mrs. Lenox’s carriage,” said the maid.

“What time are we to expect you back, Emilia?”

“Why really, I am so ignorant at what time these things usually end that I cannot exactly promise when—I shall, I hope, be back by nine o’clock. I mean to honour you and my father with my company at tea, arrayed in all my splendour.”

“Do so, if you possibly can. And yet, don’t—don’t think of us—don’t come home sooner than you quite like on our account, my dear.”

These were his last words as he handed her into the carriage, and returned up stairs a happier and prouder man than he had ever been in his life.

His mother might pinch her lips, look significant, and shake her head—he cared not: he said a few good-natured things to her; but, seeing that she was resolutely and obsti-

nately out of humour, he, after asking her to stay dinner, to which she consented, prowled about the room, found an old Edinburgh Review, and, burying himself in the arm-chair, his peculiar property, fell back, crossed his knees, and began to pore upon it with one eye, in all the delight of his former bachelor ease and negligence.

His pleasant feelings considerably enhanced by the charming recollection of the sweet vision which had just passed before his eyes; and his honest and affectionate heart reveling in a variety of delightful feelings that no cold, selfish bachelor, I can tell him, will ever know. He really could not find it in his heart to go to his chambers again that day; so he sat reading his old Edinburgh till dinner time.

Mr. Danby happened to have nothing very important that day on hand; so even after dinner, and quite contrary to his usual custom, he for once indulged himself with staying at home.

His mother had relaxed a good deal in her temper, under the influence of a dinner with her son—a considerably better dinner, too, than any she allowed herself at home. She was sitting, moreover, in that seat which she could never see occupied by her daughter-in-law without feelings of bitter envy—the head of her son's table. He had made her drink a glass of wine to his wife's health; for it happened to be her birthday, and she had performed the ceremony less ungraciously than might have been expected. She grew, at last, quite chatty and agreeable; for she could be very agreeable when she chose—at least, in her son's opinion—and she talked of old times and old things; while Mr. Wyndham, full, and content with the good things of this life, which to-day had fallen largely to his share, dozed and snored in his chair.

Mr. Danby sat breaking his biscuits, sipping his wine, and answering by a few idle monosyllables to his mother; every now and then pulling out his huge, old-fashioned gold watch, and looking at the hour.

He was a little like the man with the

saddle—he thought it was time she should have come back, before it was possible for her to have arrived.

“Was not that nine o’clock,” at last he said, “that struck? Don’t you think it is time to be talking of tea?”

“It’s only eight—I counted it. Look at your watch,” said the old lady. “I never knew that watch go wrong.—It was your father’s watch, made by that old Rigby in Fleet Street. The first little money your poor father had to spare, he bought me that clock, which stands in my lobby to this day. —I never heeded a watch much, but I *did* long for a handsome eight-day clock, I own.—The next he laid out in buying himself that watch. He said, when he did buy a costly thing, he liked it to be a *good* thing....It has a plain outside, but it never goes wrong. It was like your father, Matthew.—What on earth can have made it go wrong now?”

Mr. Danby smiled as he thought of the foolish force of that passion (so unlike the well regulated affections of his father) which had made time stand still.

He showed the dial-plate to his mother, only saying—

“It is not the watch that is in fault this time, you see.”

“Law! to think of your making such a blunder! Eight o’clock.—To be sure. I never did know that watch go wrong.”

After another long, weary half hour, Mr. Danby looked at his watch again, and then he began to think the hour would never come to an end; and it just came into his head that the old Edinburgh might help him through it, as a change from his mother’s conversation; so he said—

“Suppose we go up stairs, though it wants yet half an hour of tea; for the time seems long—owing to my not being at my chambers as usual, I suppose.”

“Won’t you have tea?”

“No, no—not till a little after nine. We will give her a quarter of an hour’s law.”

At last the clock struck again—*nine*.

“It was unreasonable to suppose that she could return to tea,” he thought to himself; and after waiting with his watch in his hand,

and his eyes fixed upon the minute finger till the quarter of the hour was over, he turned round, pulled the bell, ordered tea, and resumed his Edinburgh.

I am afraid all the wisdom of that renowned review was quite lost upon him.

The words passed mechanically through his brain; but not one of them reached that strange, mystical place, where the perception is supposed to reside. I mean, what you call —because you know nothing about it — the sensorium.

He read every word, and he did not perceive the sense of one. You have all of you, I dare say, often done the same.

Every time a carriage rattled up the narrow street, he started and listened, though he did not raise his eyes from the page.

But all the carriages passed by.

Tea came.

The cheerful, hissing, bubbling urn was placed upon the table, and his mother proceeded with all due formality to rinse and wipe the cups with the napkin laid across her knee, according to the old fashion of her old

days; and then she put the *exact* quantity of tea necessary for three people into the teapot. For “if my daughter-in-law choose to be so late,” thought she, “I do not see why the dregs of the teapot may not be good enough for her.” Mr. Wyndham rolls his ample arm-chair upon its easily revolving castors to the table, and falls upon his favourite crumpets and muffins.

Mr. Danby never once raises his head from his Edinburgh Review.

His mother handed to him the plate of crumpets; but he put it away—he wanted another hand to present it. Even his favourite tea—his beloved cup of tea—stood chilling and untasted upon the little table beside him.

Half past—another quarter—and the maid comes in to ask—“Shall she take away the things?”

“No,” says her master, lifting up his head; “Mrs. Danby will want tea when she comes in.”

Ten o'clock.

And Biggs enters to carry away his master to bed.

“Do you know in what part of Wimbledon Mr. Gibson’s house is?” asks Mr. Danby. “How far should you call it from town?”

“I believe I know the place, sir — out beyond Wimbledon Park—seven miles, at least, from Hyde Park Corner, I have always heard it reckoned.”

Mr. Danby’s brow looked somewhat smoother. He tossed off his cup of tea, resumed his book, and actually *read* five or six pages, and understood them.

At last he lifted up his head, and said—

“Don’t stay longer on my account, mother. It is past your usual hour of going to bed. Pray don’t think of me, but go home.”

“No,” said his mother, looking for once in her life really grieved as well as annoyed and vexed. “Let me stay with you a little longer, Matthew.”

“My heart misgives me lest some accident should have happened,” she was going to add, but, for once in her life, she felt so really anxious that she was afraid to alarm him.

She held her tongue, and took her knitting.
Eleven o'clock—Twelve.

Then Mr. Danby pushed back his 'chair, threw down his book—rose—paced the room—first looked out of one window, then out of the other.

A pitch dark night, and the rain pattering in the street.

The lamps, dwindled to imperceptible points through the haze of the rain—gas was not then—were shedding a faint light upon the pavement, along which nothing was now passing. Door shut after door, as a stray foot-passenger might be heard returning along the dripping flagstones.

At last all that is over: everything hushed, and a deep sleep, as of death, has fallen upon the vast and busy life of the huge city.

The deep bell of St. Paul's tolls *One*.

And now Mrs. Danby and her son began to look pale, and to shudder, and to exchange strange looks of meaning with each other.

The mother had, after all, a mother's heart, and she was trembling for her son, as she

saw the almost ghastly look of alarm with which he turned from the window and resumed his place in his arm-chair, sitting bolt upright in it—only listening.

Two.

There is a sound of footsteps rapidly approaching up the street — a clattering of pattens, as of one in haste—and then a knock at the door.

Both mother and son started from their chairs ; and Mr. Danby, scuffling along with more than his usual trepidation and awkwardness, hurries down stairs ; and after bungling at the lock for several minutes, finally undoes the door.

But it is only Susan.

She looks bewildered with the light, and her cloak is dripping with wet.

He dares hardly speak—he hardly can articulate—

“What news, Susan?”

“Bless my heart! What news? Why do you ask me? It’s for *me* to ask what news? What can keep missis out so late?—I’ve been sitting up for her till my patience is run out.

Never knew her to do such a thing before in all my life. I thought she'd come in every minute; but at last I was forced for to come and see. — What *is* the matter, Matthew Danby?"

"Come up stairs, Susan. You will find your mistress in the sitting-room."

And, mastering with a strong effort his excessive disappointment, he followed Susan slowly up stairs.

Susan was in the sitting-room in a moment, and had already looked round with—

"My stars! what keeps you here, madam, when young Mrs. Danby has been in bed these three hours, I suppose."

"She is not come back, Susan"

"Not come back!" Susan was exclaiming as Mr. Danby entered the room. "Not come back!—Why something must have happened—they've had carriages overturned. Some o' them rickety things with their prancing horses, I'll be bound,—and who knows but the poor thing's hurt, and a'most kilt! Have you been sending to see after her?"

"No," said Mrs. Danby shaking her head

—“it’s no carriage overturned, I’m thinking, Susan.”

“Why what are you thinking, madam,—that maybe she’s staid away, without leave, for to go to this grand masquerade they’re all a talking of? Never tell me! That’s not a sort of a place our missis will ever be a putting her head in.....and without her husband’s leave and countenance forsooth! — Don’t, Matthew Danby—Don’t nourish suspicions, as I see by your look you do. Don’t think badly of the sweetest young lady and the best wife ever man had.....And don’t, madam—I pray you don’t—put such thoughts into young master’s head—I’ll lay my life, she’s where she ought to be—but I’m sadly afeard there’s been some accident.....”

“It does not signify,” cried Susan springing up from the chair behind the door where she had seated herself, and been watching like the rest in silent expectation for some time, “I *must* go to Grosvenor Street, and hear what’s become of them all.....”

“They’ll *not* be gone to bed....” she added,

in answer to a remonstrance from her mistress —“ Never tell me—they’ll *not* be gone to bed—that porter sits there, in that huge black London waggon of a thing of his—day and night—and he sleeps no more than if he was a watch-dog, which he looks like enough. He’s *always* awake — and at all hours there’s coming and going in them houses — and I’ll call Biggs up and we’ll go together, and I’ll bring you news of some sort or other, Matthew Danby.”

“ I’ll go myself,” said Mr. Danby.

“ You won’t do no such thing, begging your pardon, sir, for the night’s like the deluge, and the streets are all of a swim—and you’re all of a tremble now, like a leaf—and how shall I get you along the slippery flagstones? No, no, missis, don’t let him—Let Biggs and me go. We’ll get along fast enough, and be back again in a twinkling.”

It took yet another half hour to awaken Biggs, and for Biggs to dress himself. It was half-past three before Susan could set out.

It was near five before she returned.

She was alone——

She came straight up stairs, looking pale, scared, and bewildered.

“Has there been an accident?” was Mr. Danby’s hurried exclamation.

“No, sir...”

“Sit down, and tell us,” said Mrs. Danby with a sort of forced composure, seeing that her son could not speak.

“You needn’t have gone for to be afeard that I should find ’em all asleep in Grosvenor Street;” she began roughly, “for there’s not a servant among ’em, I verily believe, a-bed—and there’s neither master, nor missis, nor any on ’em come home. Though it went half-past four o’clock afore I left the door.”

“Well but,” said Mr. Danby endeavouring to recall his spirits and recollect himself; “that, I believe, is no such very unusual thing....They keep extremely late hours in fashionable houses, I understand.”

“It’s late, five o’clock in the morning is for the most fashionablest of them, I expect; but that’s not it. There’s something more than common a-going on—the very nurses in the nursery haven’t been a-bed. Will you hear what I have to tell or not...?”

“For God’s sake! let us hear.....”

“ Well then, I went and knocked and rang as usual, and the old porter opened, and I asked, ‘ Who’s at home ?’—‘ Nobody,’ says he, —‘ Ay,’ says I, ‘ in your lying fashion of Not at home, I know very well, — but my missis was out with your missis, and she’s not come back to *her* house; and we are all uneasy, like, for fear of an accident with some o’ them carriages—so, pray, tell the truth, friend—(I knows the porter and he knows me)—who’s at home?—and *how* did they come home, and where’s my own missis?’

“ ‘ There’s none of ’em come home,—not one,’ says he, ‘ without any of them lies—as you call them!—that is to say, they’ve all been at home—your missis, and all; and they’ve all gone out again. Some one way, some another. Some by ones, and some by *twos*; but it’s not for a porter to have eyes, or ears, or any natural senses; and if it wasn’t that you’re a friend of Charlotte’s there, in the nursery, I would not tell you so much as that. But your missis is safe enough from carriage accidents; be you sure of that—and so go your ways, and let me go on with my

nap.' And so he turned round, and, sure as you're alive, was snoring away, as usual, in five seconds like."

"And is this all you learned?" began Mrs. Danby.

"No, ma'am, it isn't; I went right up into the nursery, for I wanted to hear more. I thought to have found them all abed, but I thought I'd try, for my heart misgave me like, from the porter's manner, that all was not as it ought for to be. And so, I opened the nursery door softly to avoid waking the children; but there was nurse up, and sitting by the fire, and the child asleep upon her knee.—Nurse looked as if she had been crying...

"'Oh! is it you, Susan?' she said, turning round; 'only you! How come you here, at this time of night?'

"'A-seeking of my missis,' says I, 'who's never come home!'

"We'd a little more talk—but I won't bother you with it, indeed, I won't, Master Matthew—for I can see how you look; your poor heart's all a-going noways; but I'll tell you all I learned without plaguing you with more of my nonsense.

bed and half smothers him with kisses; and then there is a loud thundering knock at the door; and she gathers up her hair, which had all tumbled about her shoulders, and starts away, like one at the judgment-call, and on with her bonnet and shawl again, and down stairs, and into the carriage and she is gone.....”

The mother and son, fixed and almost as icy as statues, listened to the appalling tale.

Susan went on,—

“The next who comes in is Colonel Lenox—the master himself; and he, he’s a great stalwart, handsome man. Did you ever see him, sir? Such a noble figure of a man! Such a *royal* looking man, as one may say; and he comes in. And nurse heard his voice very loud down stairs; he was a-asking for Mrs. Lenox, and whose carriage she was a-gone in.—It’s the worst of Colonel Lenox, he goes into terrible passions at times. And there he was, a-swearing and a-banging about, and at last, up he comes tearing into the nursery; and he asks, ‘Has Mrs. Lenox been here to-night?’ And nurse tells him as how she’s been a-going on—a-kissing the children like a poor mad thing. And then he gives a kind

of a cry, and he catches up the poor things, and kisses them each of them, once—but *such* a kiss! nurse said — and down he goes again and bang out of the house.

“ The last as comes in is our sweet missis, and she must go up into the nursery too; so Nurse had it all, you see.

“ Then she comes up, hurried and trembling with haste and want of breath, and looking just like a glancing, innocent angel, says nurse, after all their passionate ways, and she asks too, has Mrs. Lenox been home? And when nurse tells her of how she'd been a-going on, our dear young lady falls into a sort of despair, too, like, and falls a-kissing and weeping over the children, her tears streaming like rain over her beautiful cheeks, and all kneeling on the ground in her beautiful dress; and up comes the housemaid all in a hurry, with a little note, and a great black sort of a cloak, and a black mask—they call them cloaks dominys, they tell me—and she reads the note, and tears it into a million pieces, and puts it on the fire; and then, her beautiful white hands all in a tremble, so that she can hardly put on her do-

miny, or fix her nasty black mask—down stairs with her. And there's a carriage at the door—and there's a man it, another black dominy and a black mask too; and he *was* a man, for Phillips saw his boot, and the valet said it was his master's boot; and he steps out of the carriage, and puts her in, and jumps in after her.

“She was a-crying under her mask, the servants said....And that's all,”—said Susan, sitting down, panting for breath, and looking like one almost distracted herself.

Mr. Danby had by this time become almost literally transfixed in his chair—his ch  ek grew deadly pale—his eyes stared, his jaw fell—he seemed to be dying.

“Master, master!” — “Son, son!” — cried both the women at once, running up to him.

“Don't take on so, master! — perhaps they're only all gone to the nasty maskerade, after all. Biggs is gone to the maskerade house to inquire, and he'll call the last thing at Grosvenor Street, and see whether they be any of them come back.—I saw powers of carriages, with masks in 'em,

a-driving home as I went; but they were almost all gone, and the streets cleared, as I came back. Master, master, have patience! All will come right — all *will* come right!" Susan kept reiterating; but it was plain her own faith was fast giving way.

The cries of the women recalled Mr. Danby to himself.

"I hear Biggs coming home," he said: "fetch him up."

"You went to the Argyle Rooms, Biggs," said Mr. Danby, with forced composure, as he entered the room; "is the masquerade over?"

"The doors were shut, and all the company gone."

"You returned home by Grosvenor Street?"

"I did, sir."

"Were any of the party come in?"

"Not one of them, sir."

"That will do—go to your master's room again — that will do, good Susan: Don't trouble yourself about me — that will do, mother!"

But his mother had left the room.

She returned in about a quarter of an hour.

She had four pieces of torn paper in her hand.

She placed them before her son. He took them, and with wonderful composure read—

“ You were — you ever have been — you ever will be—the tutelary angel of my destiny! I will meet you at the place you appoint: and owe my happiness—all the happiness that is left on earth for me — to you.

“ E. L.”

“ I know the hand, mother, perfectly,” said Mr. Danby, tearing the paper into the minutest atoms, with a coolness and perseverance that surprised her.

“ And now,” said he, once more taking out his watch, “ it is past six o’clock, Susan. My poor mother looks pale and ill — she is not accustomed to this watching. Take her, and put her to bed carefully... Nay, dear, good Susan, you need not make yourself unhappy about me. We have done very well without this woman—we will do without her again; *but be sure you are kind to her father!*”

Poor Mrs. Danby, in spite of her tough spirit, was now thoroughly knocked-up and

subdued. She, like many other people, could anticipate with almost a feeling of complacency at a distance, a catastrophe which completely overwhelmed her when it actually occurred.

The bitterness of her son's distress she read in the very calmness of his manner and countenance. It was the very first time in her life that she had stood in the awful presence of misery. She felt quite sick, faint, and ill; and though unwilling to leave him, suffered herself, at last, to yield to the solicitations of Susan, and to be led home to bed.

It was now broad daylight—Emilia did not appear—and they had all three lost every expectation of ever seeing her more.

So they separated in a weary, melancholy manner.

The two women, accompanied by Biggs, who had not again gone to bed, and whom Susan entreated to help her with her old mistress, set forward for Charlotte Street.

But—when they were all gone—Mr. Danby took his hat, and walked out to the chemist's.

CHAPTER LV.

Oh call me not to justify the wrong
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart.

SHAKSPEARE.

Emilia, looking, as I have attempted vainly to describe her, beautiful, charming, interesting—and the more interesting, that her sweet countenance had a somewhat troubled and clouded expression—had set forward in Mrs. Lenox's carriage, and soon arrived in Grosvenor Street.

The footmen knocked, opened the carriage-door, and with the announcement "Mrs. Lenox is coming down," stood on each side, waiting for her: it was vain, therefore, to ask to descend and speak to Colonel Lenox here,—she must wait, perforce, for the meeting in the garden.

His note had dissatisfied and vexed her: there was something in the tone of it distressing to her feelings: it might and it might not mean to imply that he had at last submitted to the terms of simple friendship which she was so resolutely

determined to enforce : it had annoyed her, and had added to the cloud upon her countenance.

Mrs. Lenox did not keep her long waiting ; dressed in the most beautiful and airy manner, she came carelessly fluttering down, and, entering the carriage, placed herself by the side of her friend. The carriage was open, the day bright, blue, and shining, with white flying clouds careering over head. The air was most sweet and refreshing, as the light carriage darted forward, and made its way towards Wimbledon : Emilia looked at Lisa, and Lisa looked at Emilia.

It was Lisa who spoke first.

“ Upon my word, Emily, you seem equipped for conquest this morning. Why, what a lovely dress you have got on. That dress was never hatched in Chancery Lane, I’ll be bound. Which of the fairies brought it to you from the tasteful regions of the West ? Wherever you got it, you look uncommonly well in it, Emilia.”

There was the least possible tinge of ill-humour, of anxiety, of envy, as she spoke.

“ It is a present from Mr. Danby,” said Emilia : “ but do not let us talk of my muslins ; I have something of more importance to speak to you about, Lisa.”

Lisa's colour rose.

“I hope you are not going to bother me again with your ridiculous, prudish notions about masquerades. Why on earth, pray, am I not to go—where every one else in the town is going? it is too absurd. Pray, Emilia, don't say one word more upon that subject—for, I tell you beforehand, they will be all thrown away.”

“There *would* be no reason upon earth why you should not go, Lisa, if Colonel Lenox had no objection to your going; but as his opinions upon this subject are, unfortunately, pretty well known, and as—forgive me, Lisa—you are suspected of being somewhat too much under other influences—and. . . .”

“Don't talk to me in this way, Emilia—you take too much upon yourself—I won't bear it. . . .”

Emilia was silenced for a moment; then she attempted the subject again.

“Let me only tell you what passed the other night at C.'s Club—let me make you aware of the truth of the facts, at least, Lisa—of course, afterwards you must do as you please.”

“I don't want to hear disagreeable facts—I

hate these tell-tale sort of things ; what is it to me what young men say at their clubs ?”

And she turned herself away, and looked doggedly out of the other side of the carriage, as if resolved not to listen to a word more.

But Emilia persevered, and related as briefly as she could all that she had learned. She could not feel sure whether Lisa even heard one syllable that she said. She kept her face obstinately turned away, and appeared occupied in watching every object that they chanced to pass.

At length her carriage drove through the gate into Mr. Gibson's beautiful and extensive pleasure-grounds—she then threw herself back, and played negligently with the tassels of her cordelier, every now and then looking up to answer the salutes of her different friends as they passed by, but not taking the slightest notice of Emilia.

A group of gentlemen stood about the door, and under the magnificent Grecian portico, as the carriage drove up ; and Emilia distinguished, with a beating heart, the tall figure of Colonel Lenox, pre-eminent among the rest. Mr. Wilcox was also there, but not that one person whom she most of all dreaded to see.

Followed by the two gentlemen, Lisa and her friend, having crossed a lofty and splendidly ornamented hall, literally tapestried with flowers and plants, entered the drawing-room, whose windows, down to the ground, were wide open, and showed the bright beaming sun glittering upon the lake beyond, under the arched hangings of crimson and white muslin that softened the beautiful light. Here they were introduced to the mistress of the house, and having paid their devoirs and exchanged the half dozen sentences *de rigueur* upon such occasions, the party strolled through the open window to the velvet, grassy lawns and enchanted gardens beyond.

The gardens were but a repetition of the well-known but most beautiful English scene — of pendent groves, of magnificent trees, whose branches kissed the green turf at their feet ; of flowers of every form and hue, disposed in the most artistical variety ; of basins, and canals of transparent water—of fountains sparkling gaily in the sun.—They were filled with gay groups of visitors, their dresses displaying all the bright hues of the rainbow, while the various military bands, sounding and clanging through the air, gave life and animation to the scene.

Surely, of all forms of festivity—so that the sun *will* but shine—a breakfast of this description is the most festive.

Little, however, were the minds of any of *my* party attuned to such festivity. Emilia, separated by the crowd from the two gentlemen, passed out alone, silent and unregarded, for she knew no one; while Lisa was soon surrounded by a crowd of admiring acquaintance, and was out of her sight before she was aware. Which way Mrs. Lenox took escaped her notice in the hurry and confusion of the moment, natural to one so little accustomed of late to these kind of scenes.

She walked slowly up and down the beautiful terrace in front of the house, smiling in a somewhat melancholy manner at her own exceeding simplicity, which could have led her so earnestly to desire, for Lisa's sake, to be present at this breakfast, when it was plain her presence or absence would be equally unimportant and equally ineffectual to influence her friend's conduct in the least degree. She was musing painfully upon all these things as she paced the grass alone—but not long was she suffered so to remain; she heard a quick step approaching her—turned—it was Colonel Lenox.

She was at the further end of the long terrace, when he came up to her, where it was terminated by a winding, shady walk, which led to another part of the flower-gardens.

“You wanted to speak to me, Mrs. Danby,” said he, addressing her in a grave, ceremonious manner, and pointing to the walk before them.

Emilia coloured, hesitated; a feeling of doubt, of distrust came over her; he looked, it is true, ceremonious and cold—and yet, there was a repressed agitation and impatience under this assumed manner, which she—she who knew him so perfectly—understood but too well.

She looked so exceedingly lovely at that moment—so like the Emilia Wyndham of former and happier times—that he found it impossible to preserve the coldness of manner he had at first affected.

“Say what you have to say, Emilia,” he said in a low voice, and a rapid, agitated manner; “it concerns Mrs. Lenox, I suppose: let me hear it, and let me be gone.”

“Do you know her plans for the evening?”

“No, surely—I never trouble my head about her plans.”

“Ah! Colonel Lenox,” she exclaimed, shaking

her head sadly, “this fatal, fatal indifference! Is it right—is it well?—but forgive me, three words of warning will be sufficient—You must not let her go to the masquerade to-night, unless in your own company.”

“The masquerade!” said he vehemently; “what are you talking of! She cannot be so absurd as to imagine me inconsistent enough either to go myself, or suffer her to appear there!”

Emilia shook her head.

“She knows my opinion of these ridiculous, vulgar things—she knows them to be the very last places in the world at which I choose *my* wife to appear.—I interfere little enough in her pleasures—but she knows what I think upon that one subject—I should suppose she would not *dare* to disregard it.”

“Perhaps she trusts to your indulgence—shall I venture to call it your carelessness, Colonel Lenox?—and supposes that in this, as in other things, she is left just to do as she pleases. Forgive me, but. . . . I think you cannot be surprised that she should.”

“Every one knows my opinion upon this head!” cried he impetuously—“every one in the world—and she best of all; we had a desperate

quarrel upon the subject once before. . . but I stood my ground, carried my point, and forced her to send a refusal. Who can have had the malice or the impertinence to persuade her into this folly?"

"Mrs. Castlerising has been arranging a party in character, I believe—you cannot wonder that she was anxious to have your beautiful Lisa to make one of it."

"Mrs. Castlerising! Is it possible? Lisa going with *them*, of all people in the world!"

"And why not with them?"

"You know nothing about it," he cried, with his old abruptness; "Why not with them?—They are the very last people on earth that she ought to be seen with. Good heavens, what a fool she is!"

Emilia was silent. She felt as those who have the generosity—or the imprudence, as the case may be—to interfere in the affairs of others are fated to feel—the most painful doubt and anxiety as to whether she should actually do good or harm by a measure so excessively difficult and embarrassing as the one she had adopted. Had she said enough? Had she said too much? Might she not merely irritate Colonel Lenox

against his wife, and fail in persuading him to the only course which could be of service?

At last, after a pause of some continuance, —during which he walked by her side with that impatient, irritated countenance, which she remembered of old—she ventured again to break silence, and to say,

“Lisa has, I see, set her heart upon this masquerade, where, she assures me, all of her acquaintance are going.—Why should you not go with her?—why not indulge her in a wish that seems so natural?—Only give her your countenance and protection, and all will be well.”

“*I go with her! I make a mountebank of myself for the sake of indulging this wild, this insatiable love of pleasure, which keeps her in one restless state of irritating excitement, to the neglect of every duty she has upon earth!*”

“Ah, Colonel Lenox, do not say so!—you mistake the character of Lisa—indeed you do. This insatiable craving for excitement and pleasure is not her real nature.....had she.....”

“Had she been like you!”—he cried; but checking himself, “don’t turn away, Emilia, I am not going to offend you. To see you thus—thus, as at the last moment we parted!—yourself again

—the Emilia Wyndham of the Oaks, drives me almost beside myself.—Forgive me—but when I contrast her!...Good heavens, grant me patience, for I am a miserable man!”

“ Oh, Colonel Lenox!” she exclaimed, her cheek growing first very red, then very pale, as she turned hurt and displeased away, “ why will you talk in this manner? Why will you make me repent that I have ventured to speak to you—that I have been so very, very foolish as to interfere in your affairs!...I see it is all useless...How can you—why will you persist in these wretched comparisons, which wrong your Lisa as much as they do myself?”

“ They do indeed do *her* a grievous wrong!” said he, with a deep sigh.

Emilia was now quite at a stand.—She felt that a conversation such as this ought at all events to be put an end to—and yet, the very purpose of the conversation seemed worse than defeated.—But to stay and listen to language such as this was utterly impossible.

She prepared, therefore, to leave him, saying,

“ I am sorry to be again disappointed, but I see the less we meet the better—you will not try to be reasonable, and I have taken *my* reso-

lution: but do not forget what I came here to say—make use of it at your best discretion, but do not neglect my warning.”

And she quitted him and returned to the terrace, where she was soon joined by Mr. Wilcox. She found also among the crowd one or two ladies of her acquaintance in former times, and so managed to pass away the most anxious and disagreeable morning of her life, without the additional awkwardness and disagreeableness of walking totally and absolutely alone, amid joyous and social crowds.

In every group that she passed—on every bench—in every bower—she looked anxiously for Mrs. Lenox—in vain—Mrs. Lenox was nowhere to be seen.

The evening was now advancing, and the company were beginning to leave the gardens and return to town, to prepare for the ensuing masquerade.

Emilia, impatient to quit a scene which had proved to her so peculiarly unpleasant, now entreated her faithful squire, Mr. Wilcox, to search the gardens, find out Mrs. Lenox, and inquire when she intended to return home.

Mr. Wilcox was absent nearly an hour, during which Emilia sat alone upon one of the

benches, endeavouring to occupy herself by listening to the beautiful Italian airs which the band seemed to be indulging their own taste by playing most charmingly, in place of the loud sounding waltzes with which they had indulged the company.

At last she saw him issuing from the dark and arched walk of lime-trees, where her own interview with Colonel Lenox had taken place: he walked slowly, and looked extremely grave; he had a small piece of paper in his hand; a line or two was scrawled in pencil upon it.

“Have you found her at last?”

“Yes,” said he, looking uneasy; “but she has left the gardens.”

“Left the gardens! Good heavens! what am I to do?”

“She gave me this hasty pencilled scrawl for you,” said he, giving her the morsel of twisted paper.

There were but half a dozen words.

“I leave the carriage for you. Do what you like with it.”

“Who did she go with? Do you know?” cried Emilia.

“She went away with Mrs. Castlerising’s party,” said he. “From what I could gather, they are all intending to dine together, and to go to this masquerade in company.”

“Then she *does* go?”

“Yes,” said he, shaking his head.

“Has she seen Colonel Lenox?”

“I am very much afraid she has. I do not understand it quite, Mrs. Danby — but I am afraid Colonel Lenox has done anything but adopt the means best calculated to bring such a young creature as Mrs. Lenox to reason. I met him just about to leave the gardens, with so inflamed a countenance, that I fear some desperate scene has been passing between them. Good heavens! does it not seem like the wildest insanity to provoke her to desperation at such a moment?....And if you had seen her face as she gave me that hasty scrawl — and turning from me, was led to Mrs. Castlerising’s carriage by the very last man upon earth that you would wish to see with her....

“Oh, Mrs. Danby!” he cried, breaking out again with sudden vehemence, “why should I disguise the truth? This very night, if *you* do

not save her, she is lost. I am sure of it—I saw *his* face.”

Emilia turned pale as death—a sickness came over her—and her heart beat so rapidly that she could hardly breathe. She had started up—she sat down again....“Save her! save her!” she muttered. “What is to be done? Only tell me what can be done?” Then, holding her hands pressed against her bosom to stay the hurry of her spirits, she said, more composedly, “Yes, Mr. Wilcox....give me a moment’s reflection. She shall not perish if we can save her. Assist me to think what course to pursue.”

“I will call up Colonel Lenox’s carriage, that you may immediately return to town. You will overtake her before she has finished dressing, probably. If too late for that, you will follow her to Mrs. Castlerising’s house in Harley Street. If too late for that, I confess I am at a loss what to advise.”

“I know her dress,” said Emilia, now quite restored to her wonted energy. “If too late for that, we must follow her to the masquerade. She *shall not* be lost. We—I say *we*—for I am sure you will not desert me in this extremity, Mr. Wilcox.”

I need not give you his assurances—*they* understood one another, at least, perfectly.

I hasten through all these preliminary steps; I know not why I give you these conversations; my mind is disturbed, and in a sort of hurry; this is an odious and a painful subject.

It was impossible to get the carriage up for a considerable time; three quarters of an hour or more had elapsed before it could be found; a quarter more before Mrs. Danby could reach it; a quarter more before the coachman could disembarass himself from the surrounding crowd of carriages; and it was ten o'clock before, in spite of her impatience, she could reach town.

Mr. Wilcox had settled with her that, as soon as he had seen her into the carriage, he should mount his horse, gallop onward, and learn all he could of the Duke's plans for the night—that he would then return to Grosvenor Street and report what discoveries he had made: if Mrs. Lenox were still there, all would be well; if not, that Emilia, under his escort, should follow her wherever she was.

It was but too true, as Mr. Wilcox had sus-

pected — a scene of the most dreadfully violent description had passed between Colonel and Mrs. Lenox in that remote and secluded part of the garden to which he had hurried her; they had met, inflamed with mutual jealousy, and irritated by mutual contempts.

She, her heart still fluttering, her imagination filled with the conversation she had been engaged in — and he, in a state of mind upon leaving Emilia which ought to have made him quarrel seriously with himself, instead of, as is the case with too many in such moods, being a quarreler with all the world besides—more especially with that wife whom he injured so deeply by that unprincipled comparison with another, which almost taught him to hate her.

He had hurried her, as I have said, to one of the deep seclusions of that varied garden—a leafy labyrinth cut in deep yew-hedges—and there that scene took place which sent him, almost wild with passion, from the garden, vowing that no power on earth should ever prevail upon him to see her more; while Lisa, wounded to the quick by his violent and almost outrageous bearing—agitated by secret dissatisfaction with herself—cut to the heart by his expressions

of contemptuous indifference—jealous of Emilia, and driven almost to madness by what she thought the good understanding between them, seemed at once to break all bounds. She was like a little fury. She railed, she wept, she defied him! She uttered the last shameless defiance that can pass a woman's lips—till, almost mad with rage, he broke from her, telling her to go where she would, and do what she would; for if he lived ten thousand, thousand years he would never see nor speak to her more.

And so this most shocking and disgraceful scene of passion terminated.

Shaking, weeping, choking with sorrow and rage—with wounded affection, offended pride, and exasperated temper—it was thus the tempter found her. The contrast of his adoration, his humility, his false and hypocritical tenderness, was too strong—the faith, if such a name can be given to the unholy contract, was pledged—the promise exchanged—and Lisa left the gardens with the careless and dissipated Mrs. Castlerising, to dress for that masquerade from which she had promised not to return home again.

No wonder that she avoided meeting Emilia—no wonder that the first result of her desperate engagement was the resolution that the tried, severe, and virtuous friend, should henceforward neither see nor hear of her more.

CHAPTER LVI.

Well speeds alike the banquet and the ball;
And the gay dance of bounding Beauty's train
Links grace and harmony in happiest chain.

BYRON.

The note which Emilia received while she was in Mrs. Lenox's nursery was from Mr. Wilcox, as you will have anticipated.

It briefly related that he had brought a carriage; had procured tickets and dominoes for himself and for her; that the party from Mrs. Castlerising's was already gone; and that it was necessary they should immediately follow to the rooms.

He would explain himself further, he said, as they went along.

We have seen how she hastily put on her mask, wrapped herself in the black domino, and entered the carriage, where this indefatigable friend was waiting for her.

A few words were sufficient to explain what he had done since they had parted.

He had indeed been indefatigable.

He was of old, you know, an unwearied hunter, and, urged by his good and honest heart, and his determination to save his old acquaintance from the horrors of guilt into which she was about to be betrayed, he had used his talent to no small effect in tracking the Duke's movements, and had acquired a wonderful amount of information in the time.

He had discovered the dress the Duke was to wear at the masquerade—he had been to Newman's, and had learned that one of the Duke's carriages, with two pair of post-horses, was ordered to be in waiting at the corner of —— Street; and he had taken the precaution to order a chaise and four horses for himself, to stand ready nearly at the same spot, in case, in the confusion of the evening, they should escape his vigilance, and a pursuit of the fugitives be rendered necessary.

All this he had done; and he now asked Mrs. Danby how far she was prepared to follow, in order to rescue her friend from the impending destruction.

Emilia, her heart beating with that strange, vague terror with which the pure and innocent

find themselves filled when brought into actual relation with vice and crime, was leaning back in the carriage, her handkerchief to her eyes, though I believe she was not weeping.

“Follow her!” she said, in a low but determined voice—“I would follow her to the extremity of Europe. Yes, my Lisa, I will snatch you from vice, if it is too late to save you from infamy!”

She then, with much feeling, reiterated her thanks to Mr. Wilcox for the exertions he had made.

They proceeded, after this, in silence for a short way, and then Emilia suddenly thought of what would be Mr. Danby’s anxiety and surprise at her continued absence. It was impossible to return home, in order to ask his sanction of her proceedings—her impatience to reach the ball-room, her horror lest she should arrive too late, were too great to admit the possibility of such a delay.

She felt sure that she might rely upon his kindness and the justice of his principles to approve of the step she was about to take; the only thing necessary was to apprize him of it immediately.

She desired to stop at a stationer's shop; wrote a short and hasty note to Mr. Danby; consigned it to the man behind the counter; and, relying upon his promise that it should be forwarded in a quarter of an hour, returned to the carriage, and resumed her way to the masquerade.

This note Mr. Danby never received.

The rooms were dazzling with a perfect galaxy of lights when Mrs. Danby and Mr. Wilcox entered, and resounding with the loud music and with the hum of many voices, as the merry maskers passed to and fro, and saluted each other with the usual question as they passed.

There was the ordinary confused, incongruous medley of forms and colours which a masqued ball presents, and which, added to the hideous effect of the masks themselves, renders it anything but pleasing in a room such as this: that which, diffused in the streets, as abroad, in a genuine carnival, is grotesque, gay, and amusing, assumes a very different appearance in a London ball-room; it is usually a scene as little entertaining as pleasing, and that is the reason,

I suppose, why the fancy ball has superseded it.

The continual endeavour at the representation of a character with which nothing else is in harmony—the medley of different costumes, forms, and colours, without either aim or keeping, defeats the purposes of society, without substituting anything as good in its place. If there is to be acting, let us have good acting—a clever proverb, or charade. If it is for the mere purposes of conversation that people meet, why make such fools of themselves?

There were gathered together on the present occasion what everybody knows are always on such occasions to be found—monks and nuns; Albanians and Circassians; Turks and Persians; nursery-maids with babies six feet high; milk-maids, emperors, and clowns.

The wisest of the company were in their dominoes; these, having no character to support, talked rather agreeably together; the rest was all nonsense.

In the most conspicuous part of the room, and glittering under the light of a giant chandelier, there was one group, however, so exceed-

ingly well imagined, and so very splendidly dressed, that it excited universal admiration. This was Mrs. Castlerising's party, representing the Rape of the Lock.

They had already formed their splendid quadrille when Emilia and Mr. Wilcox entered, and, glittering with brocade and jewels, were dancing to the animating music of the loud-sounding band. The sylphs, with their azure and silver draperies and sparkling wings, fluttered round the Belinda of the scene.

She was a beautiful figure, radiant with diamonds, and elaborately dressed in the splendid costume of her day; she danced with indescribable ease and grace, and flirted her large painted fan as she chatted gaily with the gentlemen who surrounded her, arrayed in their gold-embroidered waistcoats, velvet coats, rolled stockings, and red-heeled shoes.

My Lord was there, of course; but Sir Plume, it was universally acknowledged, outshone him. He rapped his box, and strutted and talked nonsense that was sense, as Sir Plume should do. He was evidently in the very highest spirits, and extremely clever and witty.

The two black dominoes stood by and watched.

Belinda was really inimitable—the very perfection of whim and gaiety—and her repartees were received with a chorus of laughter by the whole admiring audience, in which chorus she merrily joined herself.

At first, the two black dominoes exchanged looks of astonishment; then they said, with dismay — “That is not *she!*” Where was she, then? — And was Sir Plume *he?*

Yes; there was no doubt of that. Mr. Wilcox had succeeded in obtaining certainty as to this apparently trifling matter. He had, moreover, caught a glimpse of him, as he sat unmasked in his carriage.

He was unquestionably still there—and as unquestionably Newman’s posters still occupied the corner of the street.

But where was she?

Oh, could their eyes but have penetrated those masks! Could they but have pierced through those odious disguises, they might have found her.

Wrapped in a dark gray domino, seated in a remote corner of the room, they might have seen that miserable and already repenting being.

Shivering and alone, listening to the merry

laughter that broke from the lively party—watching the light and elegant figure of Sir Plume, as he fluttered from side to side—and already anticipating the destiny which awaits the victim of lawless and unhallowed passion, in the sort of contemptuous indifference to her present feelings which she read in his careless gaiety.

Alas! alas! for the hideous mask which, as a wall of adamant, separated her from her true and faithful friends, and forbade the rescue!

The rooms are filling still—the rooms are fuller and fuller—and the music seems to thunder in her ears, and the gaudy crowd of dancers to swim before her eyes, like monstrous and unearthly apparitions.

Suddenly, Sir Plume has disappeared.

What is to be done?

The hope, the possibility of intercepting her before the irrevocable flight, seems at an end. Where is she? How shall they discover her?

After a short consultation, the only possible course left to be adopted seemed to be to watch the movements of the carriage in waiting, and

be prepared to follow and overtake it, if possible, the moment it should set forward.

Mr. Wilcox hurried Emilia through the rain, now falling in torrents, placed her in the hack-chaise, and returned to watch.

More than half an hour—a mortal half hour, during which it seemed as if she could hear her heart beat—followed.

At last, there is a sudden rush—the black domino springs into the carriage.

“The Dover Road.”

And away they go full gallop.

“She is gone!” cried Mr. Wilcox, throwing himself back in the carriage, taking off his mask, and drawing breath. “She is gone; but, Heaven be thanked! we have not lost the trace of her.”

Emilia found it really impossible to speak.

“The carriage has taken the Dover road—of that I am certain. We are in pursuit of them. Be comforted, dear Mrs. Danby; we shall overtake them still.”

But Emilia could receive no comfort. She could only keep her eyes fixed upon the window, looking out with a feeling of the most irritating impatience into the night, if night it could be called; for the gray dawn was already

breaking upon the hills, as they issued from the streets, and followed at full speed the Dover road.

It was raining still, in the most pitiless manner; the ways were streaming with water; but nothing seemed to impede the headlong course of the carriage.

But in vain did she endeavour to penetrate the thick veil of falling waters—no carriage in advance of them was to be seen.

They mounted Blackheath Hill; and now the clouds began to break and dissipate, and the light of the dawn to spread—still no carriage appeared before them.

Emilia sank back in the chaise with a gesture of despair.

“Never mind, Mrs. Danby,” said Mr. Wilcox, vainly endeavouring to console her. “They have the start of us, I know: it was impossible not to lose a little time. But they *are* before us. I know the tickets were made out for Bromley.”

They were now at the bottom of Shooter’s Hill; and there, slowly winding up the steep ascent, there is a carriage!—a carriage with four posters!

Mr. Wilcox could scarcely forbear giving the view halloo!

The carriage before them gains the ascent, and is off again.

When they enter Bromley, it has changed horses, and been gone some time.

Again they descry it in the far distance—again they strain every nerve in pursuit: they mount the top of Marans Court Hill—they look down the prodigious steep; but the fugitives are gaining upon them. See how they fly down the precipitous descent!

Alas! alas!

But hold! hold! Look at the carriage!—what is that—what are they about?—it sways!—it sways!—it totters! it totters!—it is going!—it is going!—it is gone!

Carriage, horses, drivers, all lie in one confused mass together at the bottom of the hill.

They soon came up with it.

The courier, the only servant in attendance, had been thrown off the box, but was not hurt, and was endeavouring to open the door of the light German travelling carriage, now all shat-

tered and jammed together, and to extricate those within.

The first sounds to be heard were those of the shrill treble of a French female voice, in all the extasy of vociferous terror proper to her sex and nation.

And soon the figure of a French woman, of rather an inferior class, was drawn forth out of the window. She was, in fact, the wife of the courier, who, anxious to return to Paris, had consented to attend upon the strange lady so far, and whose husband, with the usual independent way of thinking of a Frenchman in such a case, had ensconced her in the carriage, as they waited at the corner of the street, rather than expose her to the torrents of rain which were falling.

“Ahi! ahi! ahi! Oh la! la! la! la! Oh, je suis morte! Ah, je suis écrasée! Ah, je suis tuée! Ahi!—ahi! ahi! ahi!”

As she stood shaking herself upon the grass, and endeavouring to restore a little order to her toilette.

But who was drawn forth next?

Wrapped in a dark gray domino—her yet unclasped mask perfectly blistered with her

penitent tears—almost insensible with grief and terror—the unhappy Lisa is torn rather than dragged from the carriage.

“Where am I?—What is it?—Who are you?”

She is clasped to the bosom of her Emilia!

Her arms cast passionately round that devoted friend, she clings to her as the dying, drowning wretch clings to the rock on which he hangs. She casts one grateful, worshipping look at her face, and faints into a death-swoon in her arms.

And was there no one else in that broken carriage?

No—thanks be to Heaven! the destroyer was not there.

He was a heartless and inconstant man; and at the very moment when he was sacrificing the hapless Mrs. Lenox to his vanity, the thirst for conquest and amusement had not forsaken him. Having secured his victim, and given directions to his courier, he had returned to the rooms to amuse himself with the *Belinda* of the evening, ordering the carriage to proceed with all despatch, and promising to overtake it in a few hours.

To this almost incredible piece of heartlessness was Emilia indebted for the unspeakable

satisfaction of learning that the Duke was not in the carriage.

Emilia, with much the same feeling with which the mother strains to her breast the child just rescued from the devouring flames, raised the insensible figure in her arms, and, while her tears of grateful rapture were bathing her in torrents, carried the helpless form of her Lisa into a cottage hard by.

It was by this time six o'clock, and the cottagers were all up and astir.

A crowd of people soon gathered about the broken carriage, and assisted to disengage the postillions from their fallen horses and entangled harness.

One of the postillions was very much hurt; his leg was broken, and he appeared to have sustained some grievous bodily injury. Seeing a farm-house at some little distance, of rather better appearance than the miserable cottage entered by Emilia, Mr. Wilcox had procured a shutter, and, despatching a messenger to the nearest surgeon, had carried the unfortunate man there, and remained, with his usual good-

nature, by the poor fellow, bathing his temples, and endeavouring to assuage his agonies till the surgeon should arrive.

It was while he was thus employed that a chariot and four was seen rapidly descending the hill—the voice of a servant on the box calling to the postillion was heard, and the carriage stopped at the scene of the catastrophe.

A young gentleman sprang out of it, and addressed the terror-stricken courier — inquired with equal rage and impatience what had happened, and where was the lady.

The courier could only, in his broken French, mutter an explanation, rendered more confused by the vociferations of his wife.

The gentleman listened with every expression of vexation and impatience, and, turning away, prepared to enter the cottage which the courier indicated.

But here he was met and confronted by Emilia.

“ You are not coming in here,” she said, with spirit: “ this is no place, sir, for you. The kindest and best thing you can do for one whose reputation you have so deeply compromised, is to return immediately to town, and let those

servants who were upon the broken carriage proceed to their destination in the chaise which brought me. Show yourself this morning at all the places you usually frequent; send those abroad who have alone witnessed what has passed; and let the hideous and disgraceful adventure of this night be buried in darkness and silence for ever.

“You *will* do this,” said she, authoritatively and sternly—“you *will* do this, for the sake of one to whom you have proved yourself so cruel an enemy. It may yet be possible to restore her to that place, which, thank Heaven! she has not yet forfeited: and may you, my lord, learn to rejoice, as I do, that the misery you were preparing for her has been averted.”

He stood crestfallen and cowed before her.

At last he said, mustering his pride, and collecting his spirits—

“And have you had the heroism alone to pursue your friend, in this generous cause, or is there not some other, of whom I may ask the question, by what right he, at least, presumes to interfere in my affairs!”

“Every one has a right to interfere to prevent crime,” said she, indignantly; “and he must be

base indeed who would revenge himself upon the man who has saved him from the perpetration of guilt such as this!"

She was, however, most anxious that no meeting should take place between the Duke and Mr. Wilcox. She feared the spirit of her good friend might not tamely submit to insults which the Duke might offer.

But her generous spirit and persuasive reason triumphed in this, as in so many other instances.

Struck by her generous devotion — her righteous abhorrence of crime—her truth and spirit—the insolent indifference to wrong at last gave way; he coloured, he faltered, he turned away in silence, and, without uttering a word more, entered his carriage, and Emilia had the inexpressible consolation of seeing him drive off to town.

The French servants in Emilia's chaise were sent on to Dover, never having even seen the face of the young lady left behind.

All this had consumed much time.

It was ten o'clock, at least, before the Duke entered the chaise to return to town: and Emilia, though extremely anxious to communicate with Mr. Danby, was still more desirous

not to afford the slightest clue by which this odious adventure could come to light. She could send, therefore, no message through the postillion; and she resolved not to procure fresh horses and a carriage to remove Lisa, till the ruins of the Duke's equipage had been taken away.

This occupied two hours more.

They were passed by the bed on which Lisa lay, holding her deliverer's hand in hers, covering it with her kisses, and bathing it with her repentant tears; uttering, all the while, the most fervent ejaculations of thankfulness, now to Heaven, and now to her Emilia, for her preservation.

Rare and almost unexampled fate! She had been suffered to stand upon that dreadful threshold which ushers the miserable victim into the confines of vice. She had been allowed to realize all its deformity and to taste of its misery and its terrors—and she had been spared, as by a miracle, and been snatched from destruction by the energy and courage of her only friend.

Her extasy of thankfulness was almost more than she could bear. Emilia feared at moments that she would expire in her arms.

Then she would talk wildly of the children, from whom she had parted, as she thought, for ever, and whom she now so soon should see again; and then her hysteric laugh rang through the cottage. But the name of her deeply injured husband never once crossed her lips.

At last, Mr. Wilcox returned from whence he had been employed assisting the injured men and horses; and a messenger having been despatched for a chaise from Tunbridge, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Emilia, supporting the fainting Lisa in her arms, entered the chaise: Mr. Wilcox followed after; the steps are up, the door is shut, and they are off on their return to town.

I have hurried through scenes odious and painful, but upon which, perhaps, I might have lingered, with profit, longer, because I share your impatience to know what had become of the unhappy Mr. Danby.

We left him in that paroxysm of despair which visits men like him, unused to violent sensations, unhabituated to that struggle with themselves which finally achieves the victory,

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and restores, at least, the equilibrium of the mind no young and romantic girl was ever more completely the slave of her affections than was Mr. Danby.

The prospect of his life had long been cloudy — at length a sudden gleam of brightness and of hope had illuminated his heart with a joy too great for words. Then suddenly, and at once, and without preparation, the sun of his existence set in night, and he was lost in the most hideous darkness.

He had no arms with which to resist the intensity of his feelings; he had no other sentiments to divert the force of this one passion to which he had abandoned his soul. The idea of life became insupportable; it was in obedience to instinct rather than as the result of reflection, that he went out to seek the means of destroying it.

Pity him — compassionate the force of an honest affection, however blameworthy its demonstration, and drop the veil in sorrow over the vast but hasty error of such a man!

We left Mrs. Danby returning home with tottering steps, miserable, in spite of the hard-

ness of her heart, at the sight of her son's extreme misery. She was old: emotion is rarely excited in the old; they are passive to the ordinary effect of ordinary events; but awaken it within—shake the aged and decayed tree, and it falls.

She tottered along, leaning upon Biggs and Susan; Susan no longer cheering her with comfortable words, but silent and distracted by her own doubts, but certainly doubting still.

Suddenly, one of those ideas which, gleaming like an unexpected flash of winter lightning, strike across the thought—coming we know not whence, and leading we know not whither—but suddenly interrupting the present train of ideas, and arising, it would seem, from no foregone association—struck across her mind.

She suddenly dropped her mistress's arm.

“Bless you, Mr. Biggs! take her home, and tell the girl to lay her on the bed till I get in. I *must* go back again for a moment.”

“What are you going away for, Susan?” said her mistress, peevishly. “How can I get home without your help?—and I'm sure nobody *shall* put me to bed but you.”

“Never heed me, madam. Get home as well

as you can with Mr. Biggs. I'll not be five minutes after you. Take care of her, for mercy's sake, Mr. Biggs! for she's as weak as an infant."

And before he could answer her, she was out of sight.

She walked fast — she almost ran; pushing her way among the foot passengers, who were now rapidly filling the flagways—thrusting them on this side and on that with the force of a mad-woman as she hurried along.

She reached Chancery Lane, and knocked like thunder at the door.

Mary, half asleep after the night's watching, opened it.

"Bless you, girl! let me in. Where's the master?"

"Oh, I don't know! Gone to his chambers, I suppose. He went out directly after you was gone."

She flew to his chambers; but he had not been there.

The heart of poor Susan now began to beat with a violence very unusual with that stout heart of hers; her stalwart frame shook like an aspen; her large, ruddy face was pale as the shadow of death. What should she do?

Would he ever come home again?—and if so, how would he be carried home?

She saw him stretched upon a bier, her loved, her honoured, her revered Matthew Danby drawn from the shrouding waters, or victim of the poison given by his own hand.

Would they bring him to his chambers when they had found him — would they bring him to his deserted home?

Uncertain—unable to move from the spot—hesitating, but turning her eyes first one way, then the other, she stood upon the threshold of the house, from which she could command a view of the door of his chambers.

What is that coming up the street?

Who is he — that old, decrepid man, who totters as he walks, and seems scarcely half alive? Is it he?

No; he was at least a foot taller than that poor, shrunken being.

Ah, but it *is* he.

She withdraws a little within the house; but still holding the door ajar as she watches him.

He advances very slowly, and walking as if he hardly could walk—he approaches—he passes the door of his chambers—he reaches the house, and enters.

Susan bangs-to the door behind him. He has a phial in his hand....

It is full!

To dash the phial with one blow of her mighty fist to the earth—to catch him in her large and bony arms, and clasp him to her heart with a shout rather than a burst of tears, was the work of a second.

She disengages herself—she holds him off—she looks at him again and again.—Yes! he is still alive!

And she bursts into a fresh passion of tears.

He looked somewhat ruefully at the remains of the phial as they lay scattered on the floor, and at the laudanum streaming over the oil-cloth.

He shook his head sadly.

“You have done me no kindness, Susan,” he said: “but let it be as you will.”

And kissing the rugged cheek of the crying woman, he began slowly to ascend the stairs.

He went into the sitting-room, and sat down in his usual place.

She followed quickly.

When she came in, he pointed to his hand and

nerveless arm, which it was no longer in his power to raise.

Three in the afternoon is striking upon all the innumerable clocks of London — from deep-sounding Paul's the voice is taken up, and flies from steeple to steeple, over the fair and wide-spread city; and from the chapel of the Rolls visits the silent recesses of Chancery Lane.

Susan has been chafing his arm long; it is all he will allow to be done. He will not be persuaded to go to bed, nor suffer a medical man to be sent for. He sits there in his helplessness; and she, that last and faithful friend, stands sympathizing and sorrowing by.

She has ordered Biggs to keep his master in the dining-room; she will not allow her Matthew to be disturbed in his misery.

Suddenly, a chaise, coming at a prodigious rate, is heard rattling up the street.

A loud knock at the door makes Mr. Danby start from a sort of dozing slumber into which he had fallen — steps are let hastily down — voices are heard in the lobby — light and quick

footsteps ascend the stairs; the door opens—'tis she!

Beautiful as an angel! Her soft, white robes flowing like ethereal drapery round her. She crosses the floor, falls upon his neck, bursts into tears, and cries—

“I have saved her!”

He gave a deep groan—struggled—choked—there is a rattle in his throat.

“Good God of Heaven! what is this? Susan! Susan!—brandy!—Mr. Danby!—dear—dear Mr. Danby!—brandy! brandy!—there, for my sake! Nay, open your eyes. He is going—he is going!”

She pours the brandy down his throat—her tears streaming in torrents over his face. She wraps her arms round him—she bathes his temples—she kisses his forehead. Had his spirit even crossed the mysterious threshold, I believe such embraces would have had power to call it back.

He opened his eyes—he saw the impassioned affection speaking in every working feature—and fell helpless and nerveless—but living—into her arms.

There was an end, from that time and for ever, of all restraints, of all misunderstandings, of all coldness, of all unhappiness between them.

They loved one another.

I shall not expose his transports to you—a stranger shall not intermeddle with his joy. I leave him in the fruition of that felicity which a heart so honest, simple, and feeling as his will sooner or later certainly obtain, from a heart as simple, good, and honest as his own.

Few and brief were the words of explanation; and leave was obtained and given to bring the penitent and forlorn one home.

The beautiful Lisa, now no longer petulant and perverse, but humbled, grateful, and sad, wrapped closely in her veil and large cloak, is received into Emilia's home—that dark, wretched, despised home, now bright with the radiance of affection and virtue.

To her it seems like paradise.

And Mr Wilcox....

In the midst of her various causes for anxiety and excitement, will she forget him?—No.

She has found time to slip down stairs as he

waited in the passage, and to hold a brief consultation upon what should next be done. He promises to make his way to Grosvenor Street, and learn how things are situated there, and to prepare the way for Mrs. Lenox's return. They agreed that they could not venture to take her to her husband's house before some preparation had been made. It was possible that the indignant and too passionate Colonel Lenox might have already given orders that the doors should be shut against her, and thus that scandal, which they were so anxious to avoid, be occasioned by a refusal on the part of her own servants to admit her.

Emilia had taken the trembling and exhausted Lisa up stairs, and had laid her upon her own bed; and then, having kissed her father, and answered his inquiries in a brief and hurried manner, she returned to the drawing-room and to Mr. Danby.

He was still sitting in his chair. She drew a small one to his side, and took hold of his hand.

“Not that hand, my dear,” said he, quietly; “the other for ever, my Emilia.”

Such a pang—such a feeling of tenderness at this deep, this devoted love, crossed her heart,

as she comprehended, from Susan's explanation, what had occurred!—You may perhaps imagine its force in a character such as hers.—

She was asking hasty questions in the little back room, where she had withdrawn to write immediately for a physician; while Susan, in her usual impetuous and unstudied manner, was detailing all that had passed; Emilia's tears falling fast upon the paper on which she was writing her hasty scrawl. Susan departed immediately with the missive, and she returned to sit by her husband.

“ Ah!” said she, with a tone of gentle and tender reproach; “ how could you mistrust me so far, Mr. Danby? Do you not know, that not for all the universe contains, would I be guilty of a wrong like this? and do you not also know that the universe itself should not tempt me to leave *you*? Do you think my heart is as cold as marble—that I could remain for ever insensible to such an affection as yours? Why have you doubted me so long? Ah, wicked suspicion! It was the first fault I ever noted in you,” said she, gently kissing the paralyzed hand. “ You have paid too dearly for it—let it be the last of our mistakes.”

“ My dear,” he said, “ I have been greatly to blame ! but I am sure you would think the misery of the last twenty-four hours punishment enough for all my injustice and unkindness to you.— And I thank God that he has preserved me from the crime which in the depth of my despair I would have committed !— I desired to die ; but he has spared me to enjoy such a full measure of happiness as I could, not have believed the human frame was capable of sustaining, if I had not myself sustained it.”

The physician was not long in arriving. He gave hopes that the effects of a stroke arising from such violent emotion, and not from any real decay of the vital powers, might only be temporary.

The event proved his prediction to be just ; but it was a considerable time before the hand— it was the right hand—recovered its powers.

Even this little circumstance served still further to unite them ; as she sat by him, now no longer pale, faded, and dressed in that dark, discoloured costume, which, like the dingy feathers of a bird, gives evidence of the failing

spirit of life within...but bright, delicate, elegant, and charming, in her white dress and blue ribbons! . . .

Did you ever see that divine picture of Hayter's—Lady Rachel Russell taking notes for her husband at his trial; for that is just as she used to look, sitting at her writing-table by the side of Mr. Danby's arm-chair, receiving his instructions, lifting up her sensible and expressive face full of business and happiness—her pen in her hand, listening attentively, and then turning away to write what he directed, and so on.

I wish you, who think, as you most of you do, in this our year of 1845—in this our nineteenth century, which indeed seems, like March, to have come in all stormy, like the raging lion, but to be going out, all flowers and silk curtains, like a lamb—(I heard Susan make use of this confusion of images to express her meaning—you are not to suspect me of it)—I wish you, I say—who most of you, I know, think that life without every imaginable refinement of elegance and luxury, is a gift scarcely worth accepting at all—I wish you could have seen these two, in their little poky corner in Chancery Lane, with their

horsehair seated chairs, and their walls — still not fresh painted—busy at their work together.

But I dare say, not one in a hundred of you would be able to comprehend the beauty of the picture. You would think it a very miserable and contemptible sort of happiness in such a little ugly room.

People who live in such little, dark, ugly rooms have not even a right to esteem themselves happy.

Happiness is the right, as well as the attribute, only of those who are clothed in purple, and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day.

So argues the nineteenth century.

And I waste my labour to prove it reasons wrong; for such is the abundance of its riches, which it showers at a railroad pace upon every one who thinks it worth while to hold out his hat and catch of them, that those who cannot wear purple and fine linen will soon be so few, that, to the eye of political economy, it will very little matter, I suppose, whether they are happy or not.

And now, like some other authors I am acquainted with, who are guilty of the same incon-

sistency—after haranguing upon the happiness and advantages of little, close rooms, and old, shabby furniture, I shall end my story by leaving my heroine in a very different place.

CHAPTER LVII.

O, what a glory doth this world put on
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent !

LONGFELLOW.

It might be five or six months after the termination of the last chapter.

I must count back to say how long ; but what I know was, it was on a certain day in the very beginning of October of that identical year. Now days in October are, as we all know, of manifold kinds—there are some very rainy, and very windy, and very cold, as has been especially the case in this present year. But the sun has a good deal of power still ; and if it beat as hotly upon Emilia's head while she was writing for her husband, as it does upon the old man, while he is writing for you, I do not wonder that she threw down her pen, and looked heated, and smothered, and as if she would give the world for a mouthful of fresh air.

“ You are tired, my dear, I am sure,” said Mr. Danby, with one of his quiet smiles; “ but would you oblige me, before you and Susan set out upon your walk, by first reading this deed aloud to me. It may need a little correction, which your pen shall give it, and then you shall be at liberty to go a-walking.”

She took up the paper, and changed colour a little at the title.

“ Deed of conveyance of the Oaks Manor-house and estate.”

“ Read on,” said he.

She did so, and had become lawyer enough by this time to understand, that it was purchased for and conveyed to ——

Whom?

To herself——

“ I never made you a wedding present,” said he. “ Come, Emilia, seal it with a kiss, and it is yours.”

It was at the Oaks that I made their acquaintance.

My business in life, as you by this time know, has been to make acquaintance with all sorts of people, and to learn their adventures.

You know, having no family ties of my own, my destiny has been to be a mere looker-on.

When I knew them, they spent the finest part of every year at the Oaks, at least Emilia did. Mr. Danby could not live long away from his chambers, so he went to and fro.

He gets down to luncheon easily in these days, as you can believe.

The Oaks is a charming place, though there is nothing particularly romantic, or of any very remarkable character about it, if we except its very fine timber, and thickety woods. The terrace is preserved with the utmost care, and at the end of it, sedulously repaired, is a very ancient green, wooden seat—it is nearly become touchwood with age.

Everything is kept in the finest order. It is the pleasure of the mistress that so it should be.

I think you might be rather disappointed in Emilia's appearance, after all I have said; because I have talked of her beauty; but you would probably not call it beauty.

Hers is, however, the most charming, and interesting, and agreeable countenance I ever beheld; so open, so engaging, so noble and frank in its expression, united to that very first of graces, the character of a high intelligence,

and to that last perfection of loveliness, a sweet expressive mouth.

She is one of the most finished and elegant women in her appearance that I know.

As for Mr. Danby, he is just exactly the same—as negligent in his attire, as shambling in his gait, as awkward and unstrung in his attitudes, and, in spite of his wife's lectures—and she can lecture, like the rest of them, at proper times—is apt to be just as cynical and just as suspicious as he was before he was corrected.

Her frank and confiding temper, however, strikes the balance in the household.

She is now about forty years of age; and she has a son, may be about fifteen.

Leonard Danby.

If I could show you him, I should show you what *I* call a promising boy.

I will say nothing of his mother's happiness in him; but that she now understands the full force of *her* mother's expression—

“ I have loved you *passionately!* ”

And she seems as little likely to be wounded through her perhaps scarcely reasonable passion as Mrs. Wyndham had been through hers.

Here at the Oaks I first met Colonel and Mrs.

Lenox; for you will not easily believe that, after having effected so much for her friend's happiness, Emilia rested content till she had completed her work, and, by the assistance of Mr. Danby, reconciled her with her husband.

Colonel Lenox had, it is true, in his first fit of passion and desperation, left his home, and resolved to return to it no more.

But he had not been many hours away, before better feelings began to visit the father's heart; he thought of his children, and wrote to Emilia a letter, such as it at last became him to write, intreating her to visit the unfortunate little creatures, thus abandoned by both their parents, and to tell him how things went with them.

This furnished the opening for further communication.

Emilia, though she had not ventured to restore her friend to her home till authorized by her husband, fetched Nurse and the little ones to the side of that bed, where, at length yielding to the effect of the long and violent excitement she had been enduring, the sick and feeble mother lay.

She allowed her to clasp these recovered treasures to her heart, to cover them with kisses,

to bathe them with her tears, and in faltering and broken accents, again and again to pour forth her fervent thanks and blessing upon the head of the friend who had saved her.

The long *maladie de langueur* which succeeded gave Lisa time to reflect—she wanted neither a good understanding nor a good heart.

She rose from her bed chastised and corrected ; and if a hasty word in future would rise to her lips, the blush of shame would rise as readily.... It was repented of, apologized for, and pardon asked and given, before the words had time to cool upon the ear.

Colonel Lenox had also found time for reflection. The idea of the horrible snare into which, by his irrational violence, he had been about to precipitate this young and thoughtless being, whom he had sworn to cherish and to protect, rose reproachful before his imagination. He started with horror at himself, as one about to fling a helpless creature before the jaws of a devouring monster ; and he began to believe that even *he* might have been greatly to blame.

The influence of Emilia and Mr. Danby were successful in at length restoring them to each other ; and a new life was begun, not, it is true,

unchequered or unclouded—how could two such faulty beings escape faults?—but reasonable, and, upon the whole, happy, and growing more and more happy every day. For the serious cares of life, to which he devoted himself, and which she did her very best to perform tolerably, began to occupy their time and thoughts.

As soon as she was sufficiently recovered, he took his wife and children abroad.

The Duke had kept his own counsel—the escapade of the masquerade had never transpired, and the pride of Colonel Lenox escaped the greatest punishment it could have received.

I used often to meet them at the Oaks; for they spent a great part of the year at Haldimands.

They were, when I saw them, two of the handsomest people I ever beheld.

His was really a noble face and figure; but there was still something haughty, and, I thought, a little hard in his expression, which never made him a great favourite with me.

And she, in spite of her excessive beauty and elegance, had a something, it might be in the least affected, or was it only *inconsequente*, as our neighbours say, I could not exactly tell what

it was, but she pleased me much less than Emilia.

The person I like best to meet at the Oaks is Mr. Wilcox. He never married—he continued to lead a bachelor's life, at the Headston house, which he had inherited, as you know, from his father.

It is the prettiest place I ever saw.

An old, low-roofed, peaked and gabled Elizabethan house, really built in that grand woman's reign, with narrow windows, and their stone mullions, and their small panes, and the thatch thick enough to harbour myriads of swallows; and the chimneys, wreathed and clustered, the most ornamental things about the house. It is buried in a thicket of hazels, and birches, and beeches; but there is a paved walk in front, shaped like a T, which runs opposite the windows. This walk leads down straight from the house to a wide, pebbly trout-stream, clear as glass, and shining like crystal, and all hung over its high banks with nuts, and tufts of grass, and traveller's joy, and wild geraniums. There are plenty, too, of old-fashioned flowers, straggling up against the house-wall—marigolds and holly-

hocks, and virgin's bower, and such like — it is not very neat; but it is so excessively wild, rustic, and pretty.—

You enter the hall, which is a low, rambling, dark sort of place, the opposite casement window being buried in rose-bushes. It is almost surrounded with low benches, made of twisted oak branches, and tapestried with rural spoils, and the implements of rural sports.

Here there is the fox's brush—and there is the otter's paw—and there the wild cat's hide—and there antlers with so many tines—and there a fishing-basket and rods—and there a gray kite stuffed—and there a wild swan's skin, and curious mosses, and curious branches of trees, and odd bits of minerals and shells; and all the natural curiosities which Mr. Wilcox, in his various rambles with nature, has collected.

He is now sitting upon a bench, dressed in his fisher's jacket, and with the strangest cap you ever saw upon his head—is putting the last rigging to a boat, which he is finishing for that fine boy, who is deeply engaged in observing his operations, while the loveliest little creature you ever saw, in her white frock, little naked, half-socked legs, and straw bonnet and blue ribbons,

is holding his hand, and fixing her large blue eyes upon the gaudy, silken streamers.

She wants them to play with, the little creature; but does not like to ask for them.

But if she does not catch the silks, she is catching something else, that beauteous little thing, whose name is Flora Lenox.—She has laid hold of that great boy's heart, and she never let it go again.

In a low parlour, filled with old-fashioned chairs covered with needlework, the fruits of his poor old mother's unwearied industry for fifty years; at another low casemented, oriel window, which is now open, and where the buzzing of the bees may be heard among the honeysuckles, which, dropping about in the most admired disorder, are half hiding the kitchen-garden beyond, sit two ladies.

My Emilia—and the still lovely—still delicate, and sweetly smiling Lisa. They are leaning their arms against the window-seat, looking now into the garden, and now at a very tall, gaunt figure of a woman, her shawl pinned over her black dress, in the stiffest and most precise possible manner, who is busily employed with a hammer, and knocking up a few brass-headed

nails under the cornice over Mr. Wilcox's mantelpiece, she being able to reach to the ceiling of his room perfectly well. The nails are to suspend a *tableau du genre*, as it is called, of dead game, china vase, fruit, and flowers, the joint production of the two ladies, who are now engaged with—"a little higher, Susan—a little more apart, Susan!" while she raps lustily away.

The picture is a present to Mr. Wilcox; the dead game by Emilia, who has become an excellent artist in subjects of this nature; the rest by Mrs. Lenox—greatly her superior in this *one* respect.

Two gentlemen are walking up and down the garden: one holds a newspaper, the other carries his hands behind his back, and is shuffling along beside his lofty and splendid-looking companion.

They, of course, are settling the affairs of the nation, to which the rest of the party are shamefully indifferent; but where are poor little feverish Master Timmy and the baby?

Why, Master Timmy is in the Blues.

And the baby is married.

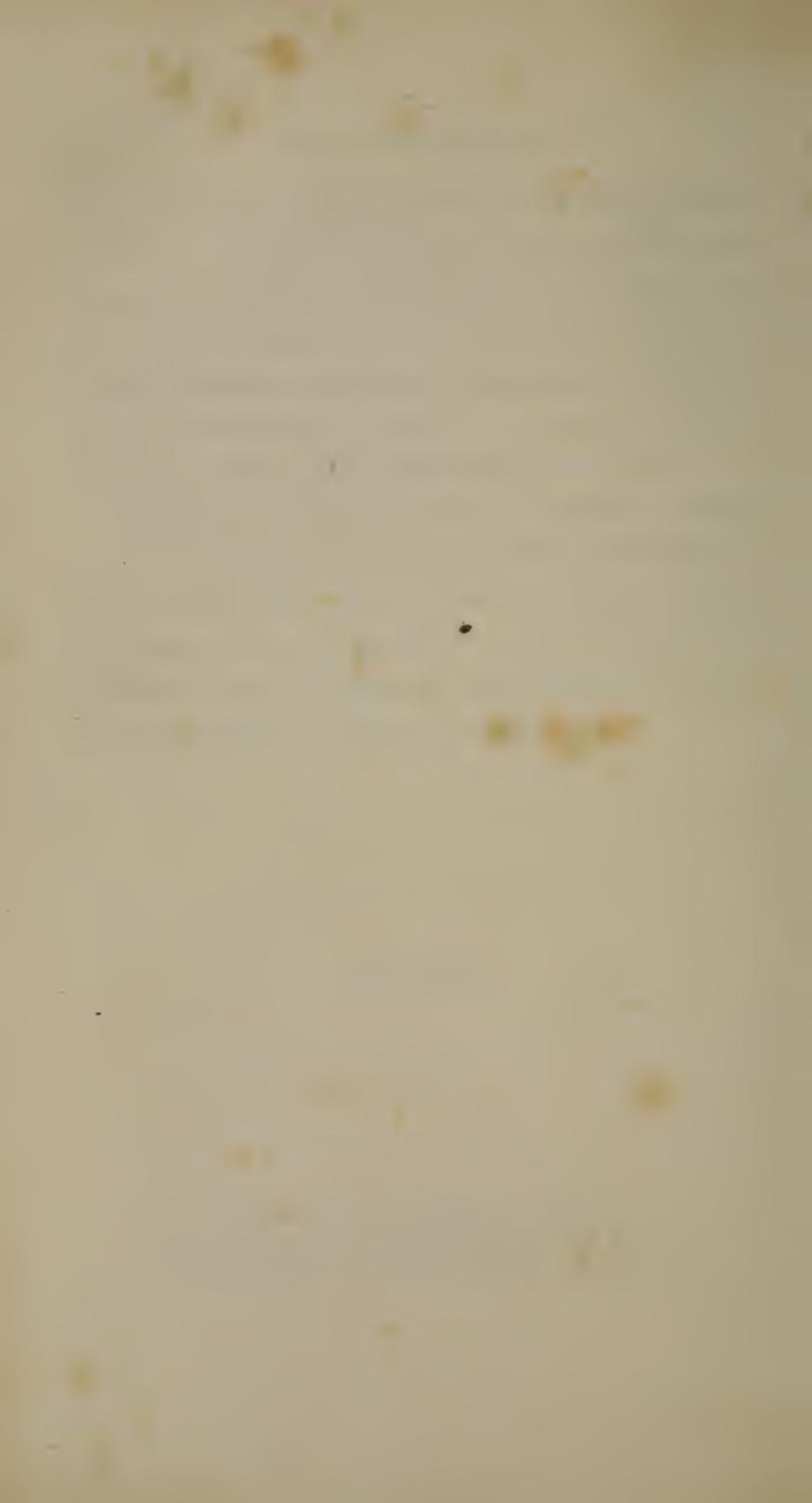
Now, was it not better, dear reader, think you, that all these pairs, once united, should have

remained united, done their duties by, and learned to love one another, than that they should have changed partners, according to the fashion of some of our continental neighbours, and found mutual failings, and mutual discontent, and fresh reason for changing again, in every new form of the marriage life they might have tried?—

And, moreover, is it not just possible, think you, that *some* of the discomforts of married life—a *very* small proportion, of course—might be ameliorated, if husbands now and then received a lesson in their turn, and learned to correct themselves as well as wives?

THE END.

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